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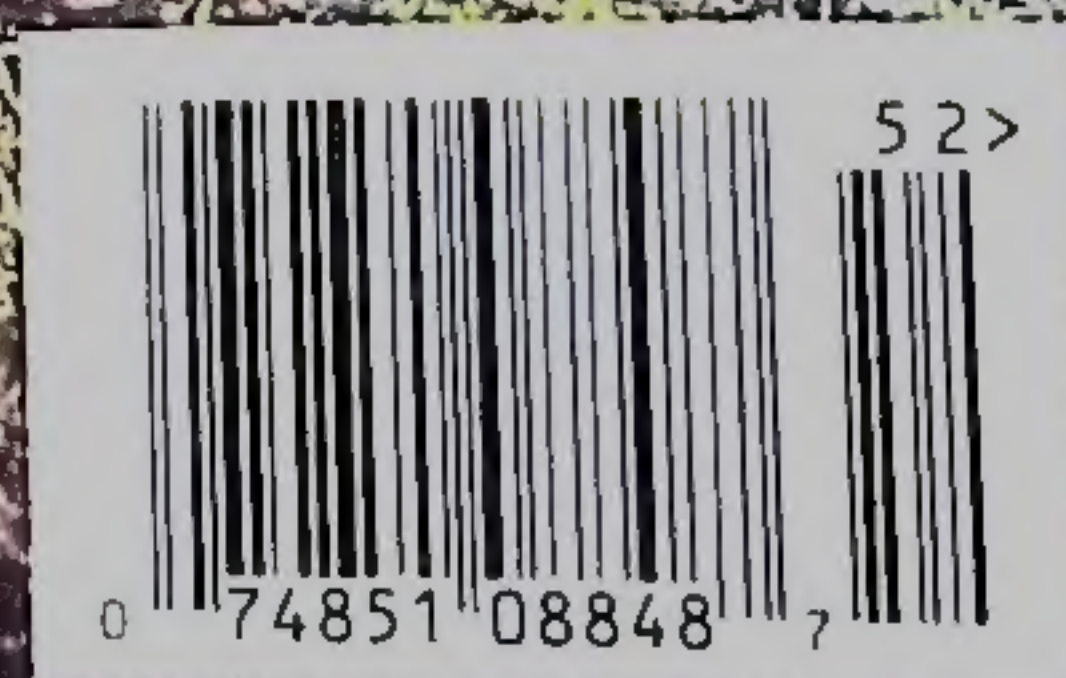
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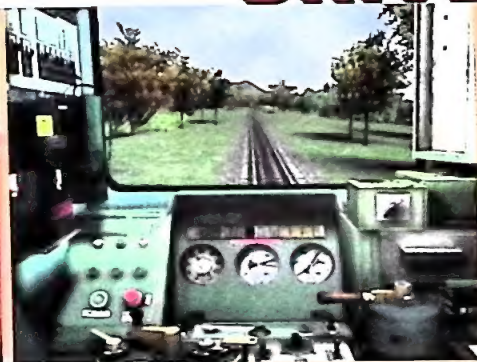
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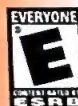
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THE GOLDEN YEARS OF RAILROADING

SUMMER 2001 • VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2

- 20** **Geep Country**
A brace of Detroit & Toledo Shore Line GP7's exemplifies the southeastern Michigan diesel scene in the early 1960's. *By J. David Ingles*
- 22** **O. Winston Link's Sounds of Steam**
The legendary photographer was famous first for his masterful audio recordings of Norfolk & Western locomotives. *By John Gruber*
- 34** **Front Row Seat on the North Shore Line**
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- 38** **Last of the Prairie Mixeds**
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- 76** **Steam's Dream Team**
The enginehouse tracks at Cincinnati Union Terminal hosted an impressive array of locomotive talent. *By Robert S. McGonigal*
- 78** **London's Pride and Joy**
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ON THE COVER: In a scene featured on one of Winston Link's record album covers, N&W 2-6-6-4's storm upgrade toward Blue Ridge, Va. (see page 22). O. Winston Link photo.



A Reading Company I-9sb 2-8-0 on a freight train turns east to cross the Schuylkill River at the junction at West Falls (Philadelphia), Pa., in 1946 (see page 66). Robert G. Lewis photo.

Link's genius served an obsession

THE NEWS OF O. Winston Link's sudden death on January 30 was a shock to us. Only a day or two before, we'd spoken with him on the phone about this issue's cover story. On our desk were recent letters in his own hand, firm and clear despite his 86 years. But he was indeed gone, and the tributes started coming in.

"It's the end of an era," said his agent, Tom Garver.

Master photographer (and onetime Link assistant) David Plowden had Link's photos of Norfolk & Western steam in mind when he said, "... [H]e certainly was a genius. This man knew more about how to light engines at night than anybody in the world. The art died with him."

Reflecting on the zeal Link brought to his N&W work, Plowden continued, "Link was absolutely obsessive about this. This was his one great passion in life, photographing these engines. ... He did a lot of other things, but this was his reason for being."

A technical virtuoso, Link did indeed do a lot of other things, particularly in the field of industrial photography. And his railroad work wasn't limited to the Roanoke road, as a portfolio of his non-N&W photos in the June 2001 issue of our sister magazine, *TRAINS*, shows.

And there were the sound recordings, part-and-parcel of his love for N&W steam. As John Gruber relates beginning on page 22, Link's genius served this obsession, too.

Crouching in the weeds, Link commits the sound of a 2-8-2 to tape.



LINK COLLECTION

Robert S. McGonigal



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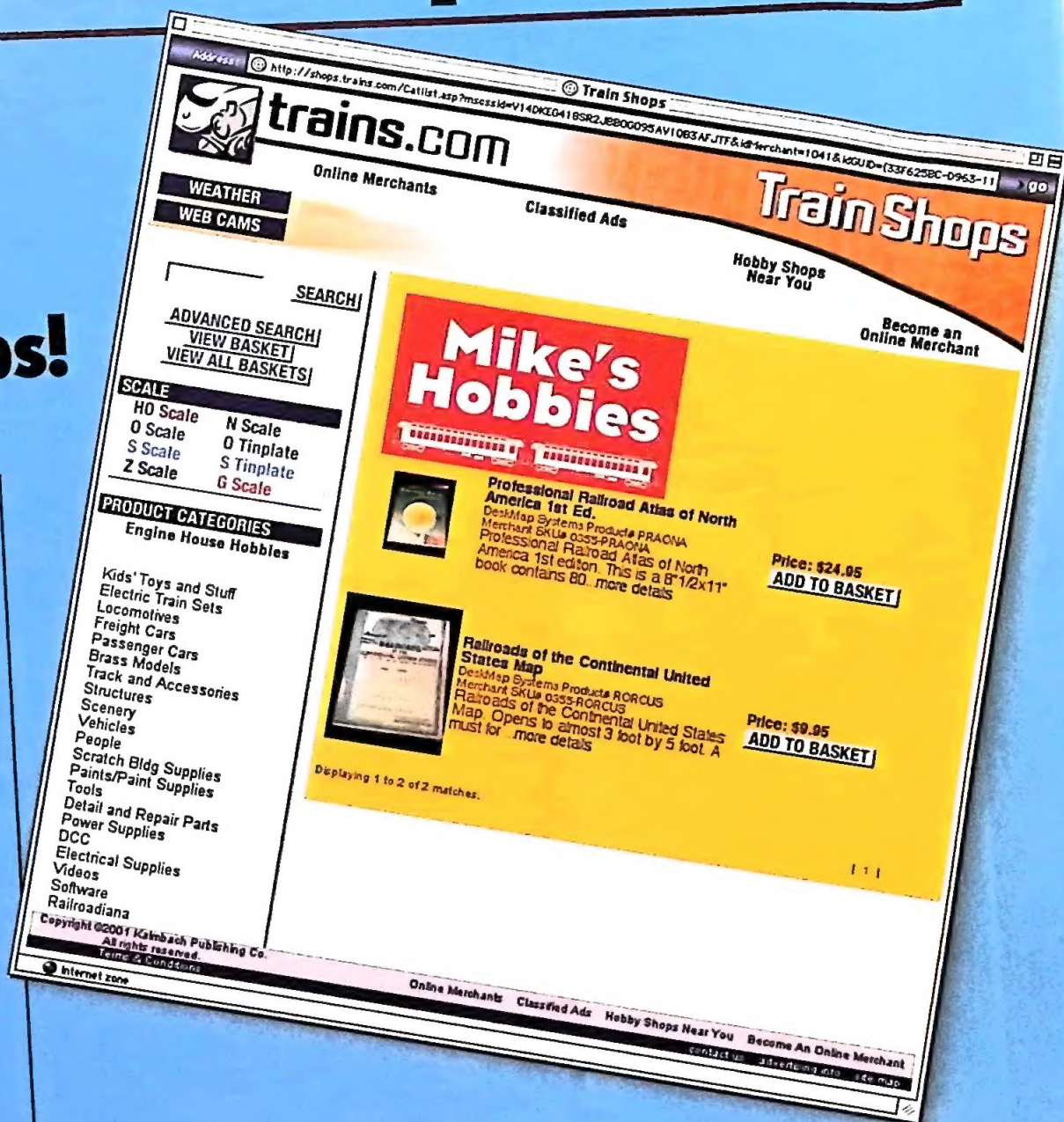
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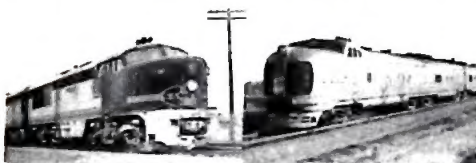
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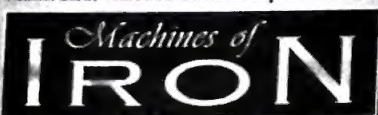


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Contributors

John Gruber ["O. Winston Link's Sounds of Steam," pages 22-33 and "Bob Lewis: He Saw It All," pages 66-75] is contributing editor of CLASSIC TRAINS; he handles our "Great Photographers" series. A veteran contributor to our sister magazine, TRAINS (for which he writes the monthly "Preservation Points" column), he also was editor of *Vintage Rails* magazine. John is a past recipient of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's photography award, and now serves as president of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art. Retired from the University of Wisconsin, John lives in Madison.



Bob Johnston ["Last of the Prairie Mixeds," pages 38-43] is a longtime observer of the U.S. passenger-rail scene. He has had scores of bylines in TRAINS, for which he reports on Amtrak, but



his piece on mixed trains in the Dakotas is his first article in CLASSIC TRAINS. He's pictured here aboard a high-speed train in Spain—a long way from Soo Line combines. Bob lives in Chicago.

Stephen A. Lake ["Front Row Seat on the North Shore Line," pages 34-37] is a retired mechanical engineer who does freelance writing and watch and clock repair in Fort Collins, Colo. He has had one other CLASSIC TRAINS byline ["A Father's Legacy," Summer 2000]. He advises that Laura Heden, who maintains the website www.northshoreline.com, is leading an effort to erect a historical marker on the Edison Court station site.

Robert A. Le Massena ["Most Powerful Passenger Locomotives in the World," pages 56-59] has written dozens of books and magazine articles, mostly on steam-locomotive technology and history. A retired mechanical engineer, Bob lives in Lakewood, Colo. This is his first CLASSIC TRAINS byline.

Greg McDonnell ["London's Pride and Joy," pages 78-85], a firefighter by profession, is also an accomplished railroad writer and photographer. Although this is his first CT byline, he's had scores of articles in TRAINS, for which he writes the monthly "Power Desk" column on locomotives. In addition, he's authored a half-dozen books; the most recent, *Rites of Passage*, was published by Boston Mills Press in 2000. Greg lives in Cambridge, Ontario.

Louis D. Rubin Jr. ["When the *Havana Special* Came to Town," pages 44-45] began his career as a newspaper reporter and retired as University Distinguished Professor of English in 1989 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He founded Algonquin Books, for which he also served as publisher and editorial director. A noted Southern literary critic and historian, he has written and edited 50 books. His first article in CT is adapted from *A Memory of Trains: The Boll Weevil and Others* (University of South Carolina Press, 2000).

Jim Shaughnessy ["The Oldest Flag Finally Falls," pages 14-18] is the author of the book *Delaware & Hudson*, first published by Howell-North in 1967, with a second edition from Syracuse University Press in 1997. One of the most talented and prolific photographers of the steam-to-diesel transition era, he will be profiled in next issue's "Great Photographers" installment.

James E. Valle ["Sampling California's Streamliners," pages 60-65] is a Professor of History & Political Science at Delaware State University. His book *The Iron Horse at War* (Howell-North, 1977) presented 310 photos from the federal government's photodocumentary project on railroading during World War II. He's also a student of maritime history. This is his first CLASSIC TRAINS byline. ■



O. Winston Link photo

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- 4-8-2 104 on the turntable at the Bristol (Va.) engine terminal
- Onetime Link assistant David Plowden describing this issue's cover scene

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The friendly Frisco

MIKE CONDREN'S memories of the Frisco [pages 14-18, Spring 2001] triggered some of my own. In 1950, my Cub Scout pack went to visit the Frisco yard in Birmingham, and was treated to a ride on a diesel switcher and a tour of the roundhouse, where a brawny worker impressed us by rolling a steel wheel around and spinning it like a top. Later, my buddy Ralph and I began visiting the yard regularly, riding our bikes down a gravel road bordering the tracks. As long as we stayed a safe distance from the rails, nobody stopped us, and we enjoyed watching the activity. We especially watched for the gorgeous red-and-gold E units with famous horse names; we "collected" sightings of them.

Besides Ralph, three other friends had fathers who worked for the Frisco. I was most impressed when one of the dads brought home a headlight from a

steam engine that was being scrapped, and mounted it to light his back yard for us boys to play there at night.

In recent years, I have tried to arrange a visit to a nearby railroad yard as part of the work my Boy Scout troop was doing to earn the Railroading Merit Badge. We were not allowed to enter the property under any circumstances, for fear of possible liability problems. I really regret that my sons and their friends will never have the type of railroad memories that I have. Thanks for letting Mr. Condren share his.

Bill Springer
Birmingham, Ala.

THANK YOU for another excellent issue. Having begun my career on the Great Northern in 1966, I thoroughly enjoy the coverage for the '50's and '60's!

Mike Condren's Frisco article was very well presented. Articles such as

this, however, would be enhanced by a map. We have a saying about meetings in the rail industry that would seem to apply to magazine articles as well: "You can't have one without a map!"

Mark Nordling
Director, Interline Business
Canadian Pacific Railway
Minneapolis, Minn.

Editor's note: Each "Fallen Flags Remembered" installment is accompanied by a map of the subject railroad on our website, www.classictrainsmag.com.—R.S.M.

Surprises from Solomon

LOOK CLOSELY at Richard Jay Solomon's Toronto photo on pages 32-33 of the Spring issue. I wonder if he planned to include so many forms of transport in one photo: Railroad, light rail (under the bridge), bus, auto (on the bridge), air (sign on the bridge), and the person

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on the bridge seems to be riding a bicycle, judging by his bent position.

*Tom Carten
Wilkes-Barre Pa.*

Imagine my surprise when on page 38 of my first issue [Spring] of CLASSIC TRAINS I find a photo of two Long Island "double-deck" M.U.'s. Our museum has in its collection the prototype for, and last survivor of, the 63-car fleet. Car 200 was built in 1932 as a joint project of the Pennsylvania Railroad (which then owned the LIRR) and the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa). It was the first all-aluminum coach ever built, and the lightest. It held 120 passengers, versus 72 in the conventional cars used by LIRR at the time. (Production double-deckers held 132.) Car 200 is on display, partially restored, at our museum's site in Riverhead, N.Y.

*Dennis J. Harrington
President*

*Railroad Museum of Long Island
Greenport, N.Y.*

Drawing a Blanc

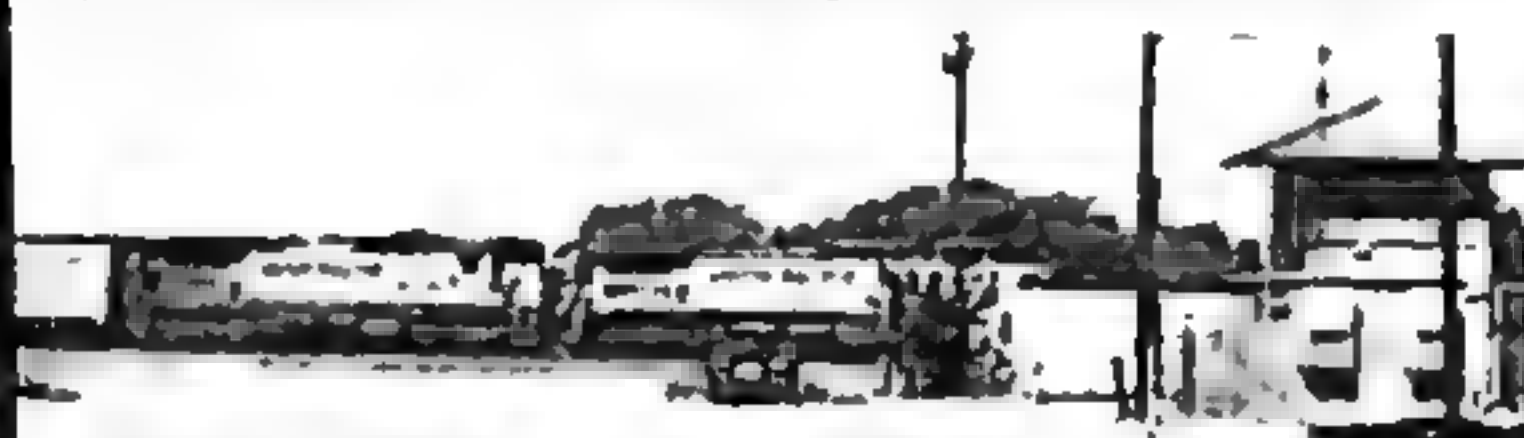
IN THE Spring issue's "Fast Mail" section, reader Gary G. McClain said he wanted to find a recording of Mel Blanc's train announcement from the "Jack Benny Program" [mentioned in "By Train to Anaheim, Azusa, and Cucamonga," Winter 2000]. A company called Radio Spirits, P.O. Box 2141, Schiller Park, IL 60176, (800) 723-4648, lists such an item in their catalogue.

*John McFarland
Denver, Colo.*

Hutchinson, not McPherson

THE ROCK ISLAND 4-8-4 [page 49, Spring] is eastbound on Imogene Hill, just east of Hutchinson, Kans., about 25 miles west of McPherson. The new "Samson of the Cimarron" bridge east of Liberal and this line change, which involved a long cut, reduced the eastbound ruling grade on the Dalhart-Herrington engine district from 0.8 percent to 0.5 percent. Both projects were completed in 1939. Living in McPherson then, I noticed that the fruit blocks off SP at Tucumcari were lengthened from 60-70 cars to 100-plus, with a 5000-series 4-8-4 for power. In one of my old notebooks, I logged 5036 on train 90

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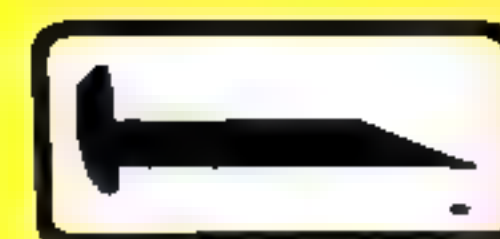
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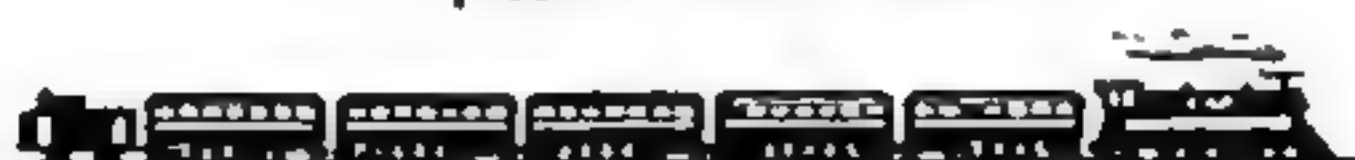
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The line change at McPherson, completed in 1947, eliminated two sharp curves and reduced distance, but involved no grade reductions or cuts.

Lloyd Stagner
Newton, Kans.

On board out of Seattle

THE PHOTO on page 98, Spring, of Northern Pacific 2603 brought back memories. As NP System Air Brake Supervisor, I was aboard the same 2603 with engineer Edward Fossee on the same train, 408, on August 19, 1949. No. 2603, an oil burner, was polished and shined inside and out; the train was fast, with a running time of 4 hours, 20 minutes for the 183 miles to Portland.

Donald Angle
Chandler, Ariz.

Speedy Studebaker

THAT bullet-nosed Studebaker on page 47 [and 49] of your Spring issue was so aerodynamically designed that it could travel from Indiana to Vermont simply by flipping the page—man, that's moving! Looks like its roof rack burned off in the wind, though.

James A. Nations
Sylva, N.C.

Catch that catenary now

I ENJOYED "Electrics in the Diesel Age" [pages 22-29, Spring]. The cover and bottom photo on page 26 show New Haven's unique triangular catenary, which is the subject of "Vanishing Triangles," an article by J. W. Swanberg in *Railroad History No. 182*, recently published by the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society. Swanberg notes that this catenary, erected in 1905-07, is being phased out, and is now in place on only a 7-mile stretch between the New York-Connecticut state line and Stamford, Conn.

Leon Tomash
New York, N.Y.

Canadian Pacific steam memories

THE PHOTO on pages 20-21 of your Spring issue is wonderful. As someone who has lived within sight and earshot of the CPR main line out of Windsor

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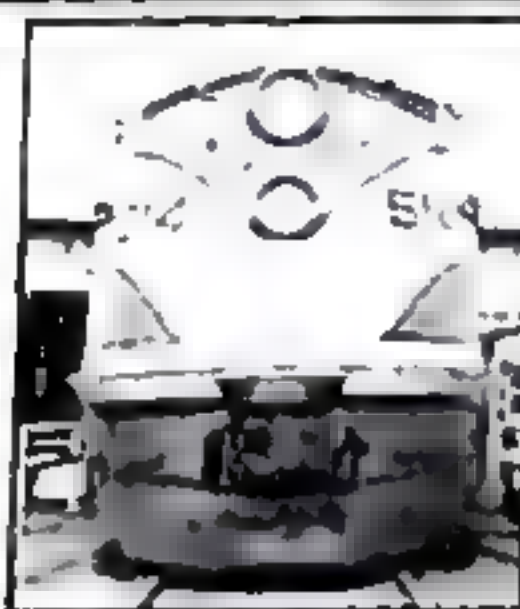


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Station all of my life, the photo was really special. Although I am just too young to actually remember the steam power, I am sure it permeated my soul when my parents took me for walks down the platforms of Montreal West Station. I would, however, like to know where this particular photo was taken.

Ian W. Pullen
Dorval, Quebec

Editor's note: Photographer Jerome Machamer, whose name we misspelled in his photo credit, says he doesn't recall the exact location, but that it was in Montreal, on the CP line to the north.—R.S.M.

Remembering Robert Aldag

EACH ISSUE of CT brings railroad topics familiar from my early years, rich in memories. Sadly, your Spring number reminded me of the loss of Bob Aldag ["Denting NYC's Last Steam Bastion," pages 42-47] in May 2000.

Bob and I "met" by mail after I read his award-winning "Against the Odds" articles in March and April 1987 TRAINS. After more than a dozen years of correspondence, we finally had a chance to spend a day together last winter. A tall, bear-hug of a man, Bob looked much younger than his 82 years, and the day passed all too quickly, filled with his entertaining tales of mid-century railroading. We talked about Fairbanks-Morse, my grandfather's career there, and my small collection of sales materials. We shared railfan stories, including his days in the New York office and my days watching Milwaukee Road's Erie-built handle everything the road chose to tie behind them.

Much of railroad interest involves locomotives, trains, and entire railroads that are no longer with us. That applies to people too, especially those like Bob Aldag who played a role, shared their memories with us, and brought it all back for future generations to enjoy.

James E. Dierks
Longboat Key, Fla. 1

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Fallen Flags Remembered

The oldest flag finally falls

THE NAME with the longest continuity in the U.S. transportation industry—Delaware & Hudson—ended after 177 years on December 1, 2000, when the Canadian Pacific Railway obtained authority to operate the D&H property under the CPR name.

The D&H was founded as the Delaware & Hudson Canal Co. in April 1823 to build a canal to transport coal from its mines in northeastern Pennsylvania to New York City. As the railroad industry evolved in the 1830's and '40's, it began marketing its coal by rail, finally selling the waterway in 1898 and dropping "canal" from its corporate title. Its big entry into the railroad business came in 1870, when it leased the Albany & Susquehanna, which ran between Binghamton and Albany. The following year, D&H leased the Rensselaer & Saratoga north of the Albany area, and by 1875 it had completed a railroad along the west side of Lake Champlain to Canada.

The D&H's glory period was in the early 20th century, peaking in the late '20's. During this time, it operated electric trolley and interurban lines around Albany and expanded its hotel and steamboat interests in the Lake George and Lake Champlain areas. D&H also had iron mines, apple orchards, and lime kilns in New York state, and it

developed and expanded coal mines in Pennsylvania. Great strides in steam-locomotive development occurred under legendary president Leonor F. Loree, who strengthened the company's financial foundations and greatly upgraded the infrastructure.

The late 1930's and World War II years saw a huge change in the way D&H trains were handled, from dragging heavy coal trains behind big 2-8-0's to moving merchandise consists behind swift 4-6-6-4 Challengers and dual-service, 75-inch drivered 4-8-4's. D&H's articulateds were handsome,

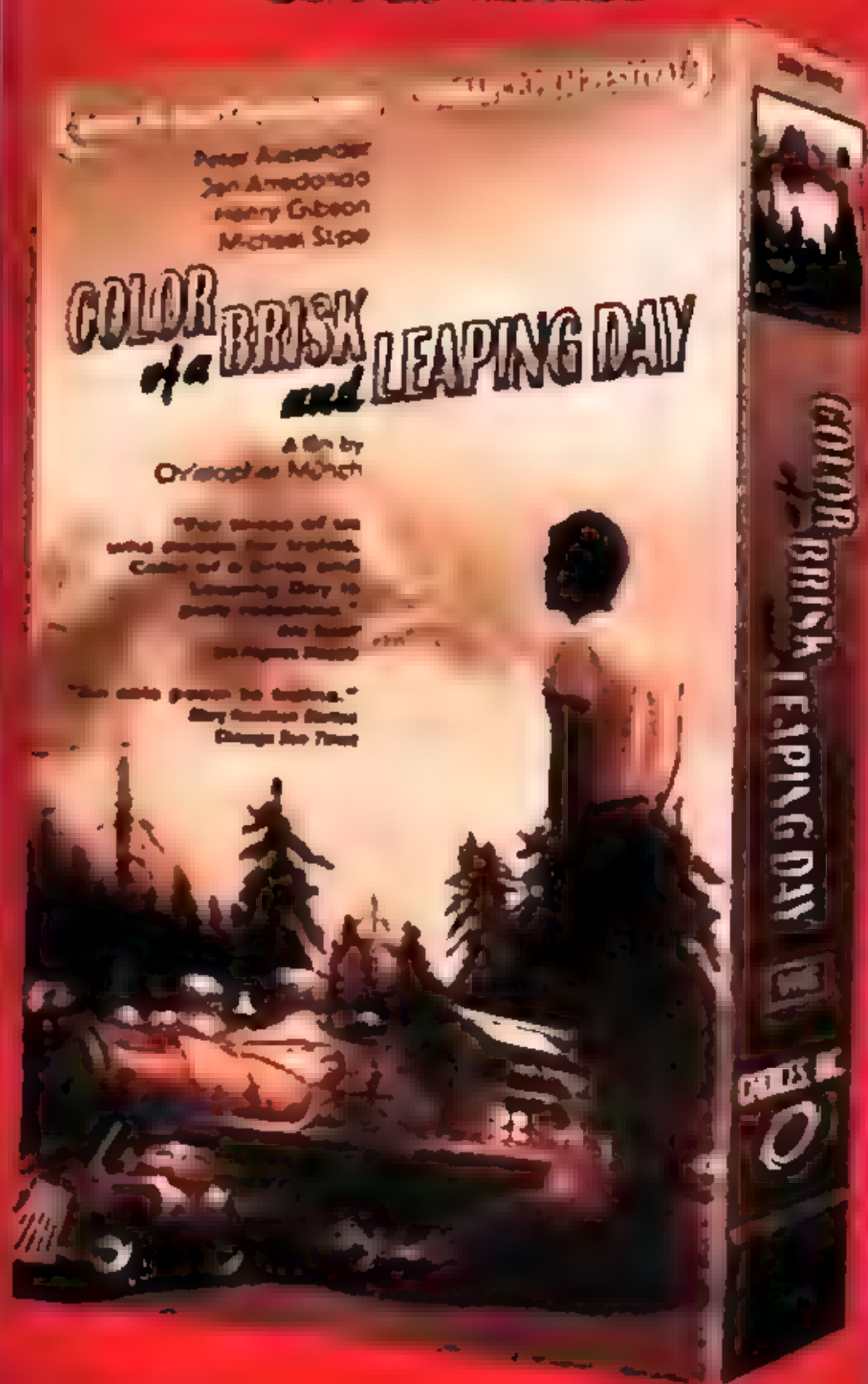
with capped stacks, recessed headlights, shielded air pumps above a thin barred pilot, and a clean boiler devoid of pipes and accessories, a design that continued the English-style look of Loree's great fleet.

D&H's first diesel, an Alco S2 switcher, arrived in 1944 to operate on a wartime line extension from North Creek, N.Y., to a titanium mine in the Adirondacks where steam-engine sparks were a potential problem. Initially, D&H used diesels only for switching, but the first Alco RS2 road-switchers arrived in 1946, and by July 1953, 179 black Alco diesels (in models S2, S4, RS2, and RS3) had relegated all steam to scrap, inclu-

Three C628's lead train AB-4 at Mechanicville, N.Y. D&H was Alco's most faithful big customer.



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By Jim Shaughnessy



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"Basic black" (and yellow) RS3's get "sanded up."

ding five Challengers only 7 years old. The last steam holdout was on the north end, with 4-8-4 300 pulling train 8 south on July 21, 1953, from Rouses Point, where it had been kept as protection power for the *Montreal Limited*.

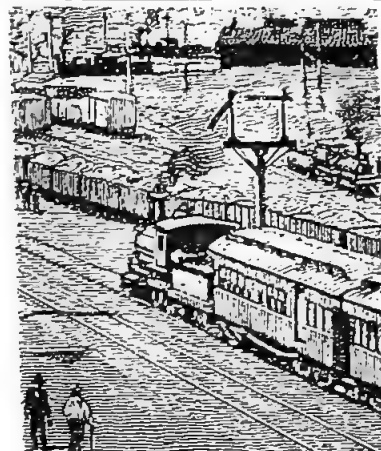
It was during this transition period that I began watching the D&H, mostly at Troy (N.Y.) Union Station, which served New York Central, Rutland, and Boston & Maine as well as the D&H.

The southbound *Laurentian* would come in behind a 4-6-2 or 4-8-4, each with distinctive "elephant ear" smoke lifters, and hand the train over to NYC for the trip to New York City. In summer, both the north- and southbound *Laurentians* came through Troy (in winter, the northbound went via Albany), and activity would intensify on the July 4th and Labor Day weekends when summer campers would travel to and from the Adirondacks. The *Laurentian* often ran in three sections. The regular train to Montreal would rate a big 4-8-4, the North Creek section two handsome 4-6-0's, and the Lake George section at least another 4-6-0. All this happened in a cramped station only one block long and six tracks wide.

My Uncle Con had worked for the D&H as a valve setter in the big Colonie (N.Y.) shop. He had a keen interest in railroads, and knew many people on the D&H, one of whom was engineer Herb Root. An enormous man, Root could barely fit into the tiny seat in the small cabs on the 600-class 4-6-2's, and he was senior enough to hold the *Laurentian* jobs. The D&H dining car was

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Fallen Flags Remembered



switched out at Troy and taken back with the engine to Colonie, where both were serviced. Occasionally I would ride over with Herbie the 4 miles to the shop and my uncle would pick me up.

In 1951-52, I spent a year at Champlain College in Plattsburgh, N.Y., and my dorm room faced onto Lake Champlain with the D&H main line in the foreground. Most of the freights were still steam-powered, as were some passenger trains. The milk train, No. 18, was one of the last stands of the 600-class 4-6-2's. Southbound freights often set out and picked up at Plattsburgh just behind the college. The hotshot newsprint train, RW-6, ran at night and didn't stop, but as the big 4-8-4 that usually was assigned battled up the little grade after a slow order for a tight curve just south of the station, the windows of my room would rattle to the exhausts. I made several trips home on the Champlain Division locals in one of the old, but well-kept, wooden coaches with green plush seats. You could feel the surge of each piston stroke and hear creeks and groans from the wood structure of the car as the old Pacific accelerated away from each station stop.

The D&H was interesting in that the southern end, up as far as the B&M connection at Mechanicville, was double track, with grades and a good volume of traffic, but only one passenger train. The north end, on the other hand, was mostly a single track traversing

Last stand: An elephant-eared 4-6-2 leads southbound milk train No. 18 past Champlain College.

spectacular scenery, with 12 passenger trains and several branches. The cash traffic on the north end was newsprint from Canadian mills bound for newspapers in mid-Atlantic cities. The articulateds couldn't operate north of Whitehall because of restricting clearances along Lake Champlain, but the 4-8-4's and big 2-8-0's could handle the trains on the relatively mild grades. A Northern would easily deal with the 10 or 12 heavy Pullmans on the *Montreal Limited*.

Second-generation diesels showed up in 1960 in the form of Alco RS11's, and with them came the Champlain Blue and gray livery so widely associated with the D&H in its later years. The long domination of on-line Alco was broken in 1967 with GE U30C's, followed closely by three SD45's that had been EMD demonstrators. D&H's last new power would be 15 U23B's in 1969 and 20 EMD GP39-2's in 1976.

Probably the best recent years for the D&H were during the administration of Carl B. ("Bruce") Sterzing, who became president in 1972. He came from Norfolk & Western during the shuffle that occurred on northeastern railroads prior to the 1968 Penn Central merger.

A dedicated railroad man, as well as an enthusiast, Sterzing truly wanted the D&H to prosper. This was not easy in an atmosphere of declining traffic, ris-

ing costs, and the looming bankruptcy of many northeastern roads. He raised morale and used D&H's 150th anniversary to promote its image by holding a celebration ball for 900 employees and running a two-day, 22-car public steam excursion to Montreal. A display train with historical exhibits toured the system behind two of the impressive Alco PA diesels. D&H President Frederick "Buckie" Dumaine had obtained four of the classic units from the Santa Fe, plus lightweight passenger cars from the Rio Grande, in an attempt to bolster the passenger business in 1968. Sterzing's tenure also saw the PAs and ex-D&RGW cars on several public excursions, plus one behind the last two extant Baldwin RF16 Sharknose diesels, acquired from the Monongahela Railway in 1974.

The creators of Conrail in 1976 sought to preserve Eastern rail competition with a second carrier. This role fell



Two of D&H's four "renaissance" PAs lead the *Laurentian* at West Waterford, N.Y., in December 1970.

to the D&H, which expanded via track-age rights to Buffalo, N.Y., Harrisburg, Pa., Oak Island, N.J., and eventually Potomac Yard, Va. (it also added a line to Wilkes-Barre, Pa.). Suddenly more than doubled in size, the D&H needed more locomotives and cars, which it got

from two roads, Reading and Lehigh Valley, that were entering Conrail. All existing debt was retired with the aid of a \$28 million loan approved by the United States Railway Association.

The expanded operation lost money, but Sterzing hung tough until he resigned at the behest of the USRA in mid-1977. D&H continued under a succession of N&W-associated managers, who looked for ways to get rid of it. The PAs and Sharks were sidelined and sold. The six-axle freight units, including big Alco C628's, were withdrawn in favor of four-axle power. Some units that arrived during the expansion were repainted in blue and gray, but vestiges of LV and Reading colors contributed to over a dozen paint schemes in the fleet.

Beginning in the late '70's, Guilford Transportation Industries acquired the Maine Central and B&M and arranged with D&H to pool power on through

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O. Winston Link's THE FADING GIANT

SOUNDS OF STEAM RAILROADING VOL. 2

As featured in this issue of Classic Trains, the late O. Winston Link's "The Fading Giant" is now available on compact disc. This incomparable recording, digitally remastered from the original tapes, is accompanied by a 28-page descriptive booklet containing 26 of Winston Link's best photographs. The final sequence of the N&W Class J 4-8-4 arriving and departing Rural Retreat, Virginia on Christmas Eve is a classic example of Winston's



finest audio work. \$20 per disc includes S&H to US addresses. Check or money order only, please.

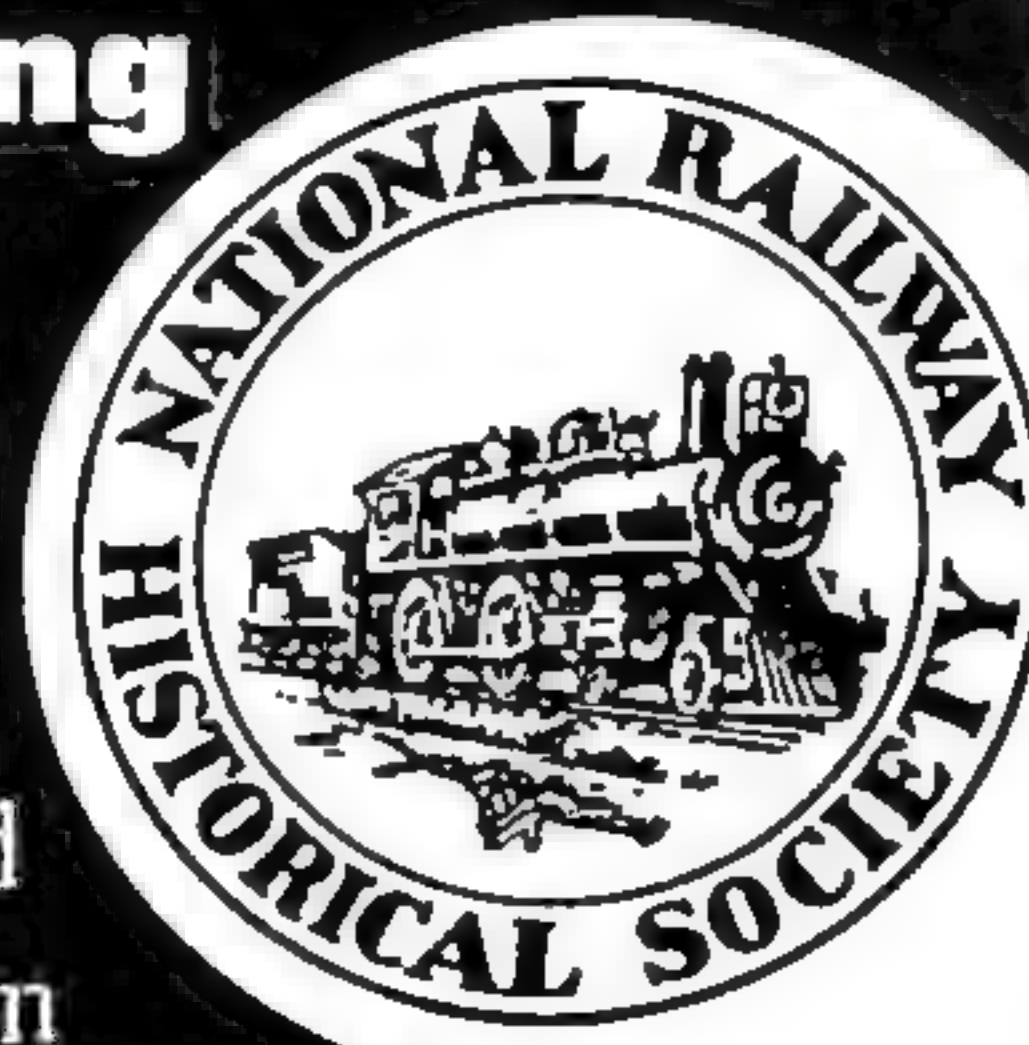
Also available:

"Trains that Passed in the Night", 58-minute video documentary featuring Link's great night photography of the Norfolk & Western. \$44.95 includes S&H

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Fallen Flags Remembered

trains. Guilford bought the D&H in 1984, finally realizing the dream of a New England system that Dumaine and others before him had long proposed. Guilford strove to cut costs and revise labor practices, but tried to do too much too fast. Customers were lost. Unions struck twice. In June 1988 the courts ruled that Guilford had to pay all back wages and benefits lost during the strikes. This was a sizeable figure, so Guilford declared the D&H bankrupt.

It was sad to see a once proud and vibrant organization self-destruct. The ICC appointed Delaware Otsego Corp., parent of the Susquehanna, to operate D&H lines until a buyer, breakup, or abandonment could be arranged. Walter Rich, DO president and a rail enthusiast, rose to the occasion with the help of financial backer CSX and did a remarkable job in getting things moving.

Finally, after several plans were proposed, Canadian Pacific was authorized to buy the D&H for \$25 million on January 1, 1991. CP gave the property a needed infusion of investment, and retained the D&H corporate name in one of its subsidiaries—St. Lawrence & Hudson Railway—which operated CP lines in eastern Canada. The property has done well under CP, but even before the December 1, 2000, retirement of the D&H name, outward symbols like locomotives had mostly disappeared. Somehow, CP's "Northeastern U.S. Service Area" just doesn't sound the same. ■

D&H fact file

(comparative figures are for 1929 and 1983)

Route-miles: 898; 1581

Locomotives: 445; 134

Passenger cars: 374; 0

Freight cars: 15,735; 4341

Headquarters city: Albany, N.Y.

Special interest group: Bridge Line Historical Society, P.O. Box 13324, Albany NY 12212; www.bridge-line.org

Source: *The Historical Guide to North American Railroads* (Kalmbach, 1999).

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View photos and a route map of the Delaware & Hudson at our website, classictrainsmag.com

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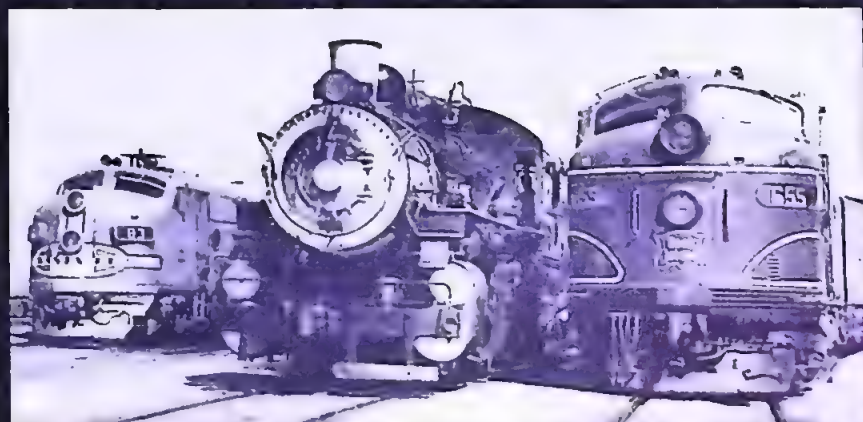
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Geep country



J. DAVID INGLES

IN THE EARLY '60's, my home Detroit area was Geep country. Although New York Central fielded GP7's and 9's, it was the exotica from other builders—FA's, Sharks, and the like—that commanded Central attention. NYC's neighbors, though, were Geep-dependent for road power. Except for 22 F3's, Grand Trunk Western was virtually all-GP9. Chesapeake & Ohio had dieselized its Northern District (former Pere Marquette, *i.e.*, Michigan)—with 79 GP7's and 19 GP9's. My dad's employer, Detroit, Toledo & Ironton, depended on 37 bright-orange GP7's and 9's.

Then there was little Detroit & Toledo Shore Line. Half-owned each by GTW and Nickel Plate, the obscure 50-mile Shore Line ran an arrow-straight, flat, double track between its namesake cities, parallel to the NYC main line and the new Interstate 75 (hence the road's future slogan, "Expressway for Industry").

Before D&TSL's blue and yellow succumbed to NKP black, 2 of Shore Line's 10 GP7's—its only road power—chanted south toward Lang Yard in Toledo in June 1961. Yes, even without including nearby Ontario [page 78], the Motor City was Geep country.—*J. David Ingles*



O. Winston Link's *sounds of steam*

The legendary photographer was famous first for his masterful audio recordings of Norfolk & Western steam locomotives

By John Gruber
Photos by O. Winston Link

HEY LEFT ME ALONE from the time I started until I finished."

Reflecting on his experiences tape-recording and photographing the end of steam on the Norfolk & Western Railway, O. Winston Link smiled and told how the railroad helped him the most.

He repeated the words quietly: "Left me alone."

In an interview at his home in Westchester County, N.Y., seven months before his January 2001 death, Link expressed pride in the confidence the railroaders placed in him and his work. From the president down to the rank-and-file, N&W folks were proud of their powerful, modern locomotives, and were pleased that Link would take the time to show them in grand style in their last days of operation.

The photographs born of Link's talent and the railroad's cooperation are today seen in museums and households across the country. Link even became something of a folk hero for his efforts—undertaken entirely at his own expense—between 1955 and 1960. His work was fortuitous, for the 2500-mile railway, which had built the last steam locomotive for U.S. common-carrier service in its Roanoke Shops in 1953, dropped the fires for the last time in May 1960.

In recent years the fine-art world has begun to notice his



In a photo that graced the cover of Link's 1987 book *Steam, Steel & Stars*, N&W K1 4-8-2 104 (far left) is serviced at Bristol, Va. Link also made audio recordings of 104 moving around the terminal.

Dressed for winter weather, Link works with his Ampex stereo recorder in N&W baggage car 111.

work. Harry N. Abrams published two lavish books: *Steam, Steel & Stars* (1987) and *The Last Steam Railroad in America* (1995). Exhibits have toured the country. He posed on the steps of mothballed N&W 2-6-6-4 1218 for a two-page spread in *Vanity Fair* (January 2001), whose feature, "Shooting Past 80," showcased 18 of "photography's most enduring masters, now clicking into their 80's and 90's."

Born in 1914, Link earned a degree in civil engineering at Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn in 1937. Following graduation, he took a job as a photographer with Carl Byoir & Associates, a large public-relations firm. As an independent industrial photographer after World War II, he attracted large corporations as clients, providing him with the credibility and know-how to make his now-famous photography proposal to N&W management in 1955.

The railroad welcomed Link with open arms. "Every single person who worked there helped me in one way or another. But the people who put out the word were Robert H. Smith, the president, and Clarence Pond, superintendent of motive power. Pond was a silent supporter. He never said much, but he was proud of his engines and he loved them. Hobart Scott

Sr., another big supporter, was super into the idea of transportation. It got so I called him and told him what I needed. He always arranged what locomotives and trains I could ride."

Riding the sound wave

In all, Link released five LP recordings of the N&W between 1957 and 1977, plus a 45 rpm in 1962 of the *General*, Louisville & Nashville's famous Civil War locomotive. ("I made it because it was a steam engine, and it was an old one," he said.) Link's timing was good. The LP had been introduced only eight years before his first N&W record, and with the LP's high quality came a demand for better recording techniques and more interesting sounds.

Ben Bane Dulaney, the N&W public-relations representative who often helped with arrangements, wrote the descriptions on the jackets of the first four recordings. Link insisted on accurate and atmospheric text, which Dulaney provided. Dulaney also wrote the text for an article in the N&W's company magazine and a booklet, distributed free by the N&W in 1958.

Link's nephew, LeRoy (Corky) Zider, now living in San



Francisco, ran the tape recorder many times. "That is not easy, because you have to regulate your volumes so when the whistle blows it is not too loud, and not out of proportion with the rest of it. We just had to set it and play it by ear. With practice, you get to learn a little bit about it." Through 1957, the recordings are in mono using one microphone.

"Everything we had was the best. My Ampex equipment, people told me at the time, would be good until the year 2000. I thought that was a long way off. I got the stereo recorder in 1958 and I am still using it. Some work had to be done on it, but it's still good. I had to go to the bank and get the money for it. I spent about \$4000 on that trip; I was in hock for a long time, but I got great stuff with it."

Link started making the tapes about 1956 because he wanted sound to go with exhibitions at his studio in New York; George Thom helped with the first efforts. Link didn't like other people's recordings because they were not authentic. "One guy had a recording of a locomotive blasting back and forth. It was static, like the sound of someone taking his shoes off. In my recordings, the train is actually running, at work, during the time the N&W was using steam."



N&W's J-class 4-8-4's starred on two segments of Link's second LP, *The Fading Giant*. He and assistant Tom Garver taped J's 611 and 605 during a Roanoke-Williamson (W.Va.) round trip on the *Cavalier*. On another day (top), 602 leads the train out of Williamson in the rain. Link's most famous recording features 603 with the *Pelican* stopping at Rural Retreat, Va., on Christmas Eve 1957. He photographed the train that night, too (left).

With a local dog in attendance (above), Link's nephew LeRoy Zider mans the Tapesonic recorder.

On the road with Winston Link

I MADE THREE TRIPS with Winston Link while he was photographing and making recordings on the Norfolk & Western: in October 1957, when we documented the Abingdon Branch; in late May and early June 1958, which was a trip just to make recordings; and in August 1958. On all the trips a tape recorder was a vital part of our equipment. First it was a Tapesonic, a huge machine and heavy as lead, but on the last trip Winston switched to a smaller, but oh-so-expensive Ampex stereo recorder complete with two suitcase-size monitors.

On the Abingdon Branch trip, I was running the recorder when Jimbo decided to howl his lungs out in concert with engineer F. T. Nichols's chime whistle. I was with Winston when Mrs. Gray pulled the plug as that double-header was clawing its way up Blue Ridge. Surprisingly, he held his well-known temper, but we came back the next Sunday armed with fuses. Sure enough, she had taken them out when she went away, but we were ready!

The most memorable recording of that trip for me was made in the roundhouse in Bristol, Va. The Abingdon Branch train returned in the late afternoon, and Winston wouldn't waste a second, so after a quick dinner at the local Howard Johnson's, we'd head from Abingdon to Bristol. We were all set up one night when the roundhouse whistle sounded for the end of the evening lunch hour. We spun the gain control on the Tapesonic to get it, and then locomotive 104 moved out of the house, tender first. *Crash, crash, crash*, as the six-wheel trucks rolled onto the turntable. The recording level meter hit the pin, but it was all there and undistorted. This sequence is on *The Fading Giant*, and it still sends shivers down my spine when I hear it.

On the second trip, we were using Winston's new power supply. It gave him great freedom. We loaded it onto the tender of a Y6 and made recordings of pushers working hard to get the freights up and over Blue Ridge. But the day we rode the west- and eastbound *Cavaliers* was among the most wonderful I spent on the project.

We ran along the banks of the Tug Fork of the New River, through a landscape tortured by mining, the river running black with coal tailings, but still soft and beautiful in the early summer warmth. The sounds were so good, but I remember the experience best from my other senses, the smell of honeysuckle blooming beside the right of way mixing with whiffs of coal smoke, and the vision of the evening landscape filled with fireflies. We reached Roanoke at 11:35 that evening, and no doubt about it, it

One of the most celebrated of all Link's recordings is the final track on *The Fading Giant*, his second album. It was made on Christmas Eve 1957 at Rural Retreat, Va. Mrs. J. E. Dodson is playing carols in a church nearby as train 42 from New Orleans, the *Pelican*, pulls into the station.

"We found out about this lady when we were riding around looking for locations for pictures. We heard the chimes, then investigated to find out where they were coming from. We asked her to start playing about 20 minutes before the train arrived, and to continue playing until we came down and told her to stop. 'Play constantly, don't stop regardless of what you hear,' we said.



On a freight train clawing its way up the grade to Blue Ridge, Garver holds a microphone to catch the sounds of the Y6 2-8-8-2 pusher he's riding.

was 15½ hours in a baggage car I'll never forget.

Waiting, waiting . . . waiting! I remember another sequence that took us three days to make. For several evenings we went to Glade Spring, Va., to capture a shifter coming in with a load of plasterboard. Each time we arrived we found it had come in before us. Finally we got there at 4 p.m.—and it didn't arrive until midnight, but the sequence (on *2nd Pigeon and the Mockingbird*) was worth the wait. It is an aural masterpiece of a Y6, loaded to capacity, struggling upgrade on rails slippery with autumn leaves.

Waiting, looking, listening: every sense was heightened, knowing that what we were recording was a precious document, for soon these sounds and sights would all be gone. Working for Winston Link wasn't easy—but it was a magical and even a transformative experience which I will treasure forever.—Thomas H. Garver

"She did fine. I think she made one wrong note maybe, that's all. She thought that was terrible; we thought that was good because that makes it legitimate. It's not a phony thing.

"That night happened to be wind-free. There is a lot of noise in and around the area because there were stores, and the station was there, and there were people slamming doors and starting cars and things. We moved everybody out of the area. They cooperated fine. Everybody was OK."

Another notable track from *The Fading Giant* involved the famous Abingdon Branch mixed train—and a howling dog.

"That's Jimbo. He was in Husk [Nella in the timetable] in North Carolina," recalled Link. "The thing about that was, I



was just hoping everything worked. I knew where the dog was in the building. I was outside at a point where I could photograph the train. The engineer whistled in the far distance. As soon as that happened, the dog trotted out. I wondered, 'Where is he going to stop; where is he going to sit? How far from the microphones? Is he too far away? Too close?' There is nothing you can do except set the mike for what you want, which is the train coming in. If you get the dog, you're lucky. As it was, the dog came out. The engineer was blowing the whistle for quite a way, so it gave the dog time to get set, get his voice tuned up. He came on fine, just right. Couldn't have been better."

Was the result completely an accident? "It's not an accident that we were there; we were there because we knew the dog would probably come out. But you couldn't make him come out. And you couldn't tell him to howl. And you had to hope he did what he usually did. The sound of the whistle hurt his ears, so that's what he did. It was a shrill, unusual whistle, the only one like it on the railroad. The engineer [Fitzhugh T. Nichols] had one of the fellows in the shop make it for him."

Trouble on Blue Ridge

Link had lots of favorite tapes, but has special memories of recording trains battling the tough grade east of Roanoke. "I suppose those on Blue Ridge were about the most fun." It was there that he lost the electrical power for the recorder when a woman disconnected an extension cord.

"We paid her for electricity to use it as long as we were there, which might have been an hour or two. I think it was a dollar; it was satisfactory for her and for me. We had a doubleheader coming through with two A's, or an A and a Y. They were coming along just the way we wanted, with some pretty good whistling. Then, without any warning at all, she



In one of Link's best-known photos (top), 4-8-0 382 on the Abingdon Branch mixed train works up the 3-percent grade into Green Cove, Va. Link also made audio tapes here of this colorful train.

Jimbo, the "Hound of Husk," suns himself a few yards from the Abingdon Branch track. The combination of his howling voice and engine 382's distinctive whistle made for a memorable recording.



pulled the plug out of the socket in her house."

She wanted another dollar? "No, she just stopped. She didn't especially hold me up for money. She'd ruined everything by that time. I had lost those trains; there wouldn't be another doubleheader for I don't know how long. We had done all we could do that day anyway, so we figured we'd come back on a Sunday. She left on Saturday and Sunday. We came back with fuses, put them in, and took whatever power we wanted. She never knew the difference."

After that problem, he got his own power supply. It used two 12-volt automobile batteries; a D.C. motor powered a 120-volt A.C. generator, providing dependable power without

noise that might affect the recording heads.

His first use of the new power supply was in recording class J 4-8-4 No. 611 pulling train 15, the *Cavalier*, from Roanoke to Williamson, W.Va., on June 1, 1958. After a two-hour layover in Williamson, where he recharged the batteries at a nearby gas station, Link and another assistant, Tom Garver, returned on the eastbound *Cavalier* behind engine 605. To aid in the recording, the railroad added a baggage car full of mail sacks behind the tender. The sacks would quiet the drumming sound of the sides of the car as it vibrated.

Garver remembers the session well. "With the recorder running perfectly, I recall the return trip on train 16 as being



a magical experience. We now understood the optimum recording levels, and didn't have to ride the gain control. We also knew what was coming up, and what would make an interesting sound picture, so we were ready."

Link never dreamed the 611 would later become famous in Norfolk Southern excursion service. His is the only known recording of the locomotive in regular service, made just a few weeks before the J's were bumped by diesels.

"We had no idea of anything, and absolutely no concept of how much time we were 'wasting.' I did it because it was fun. I wanted to get a recording of the era of steam and these beautiful engines. All the people were so nice; they still are.

An A-class 2-6-6-4 hurries an eastbound time freight up Blue Ridge in January 1958 (out of view, a Y6 pushes on the rear). Link devoted an entire album, *Thunder on Blue Ridge*, to the stirring spectacle on the grade east of Roanoke.

I run into their grandchildren. I have kept up with quite a few people in Roanoke."

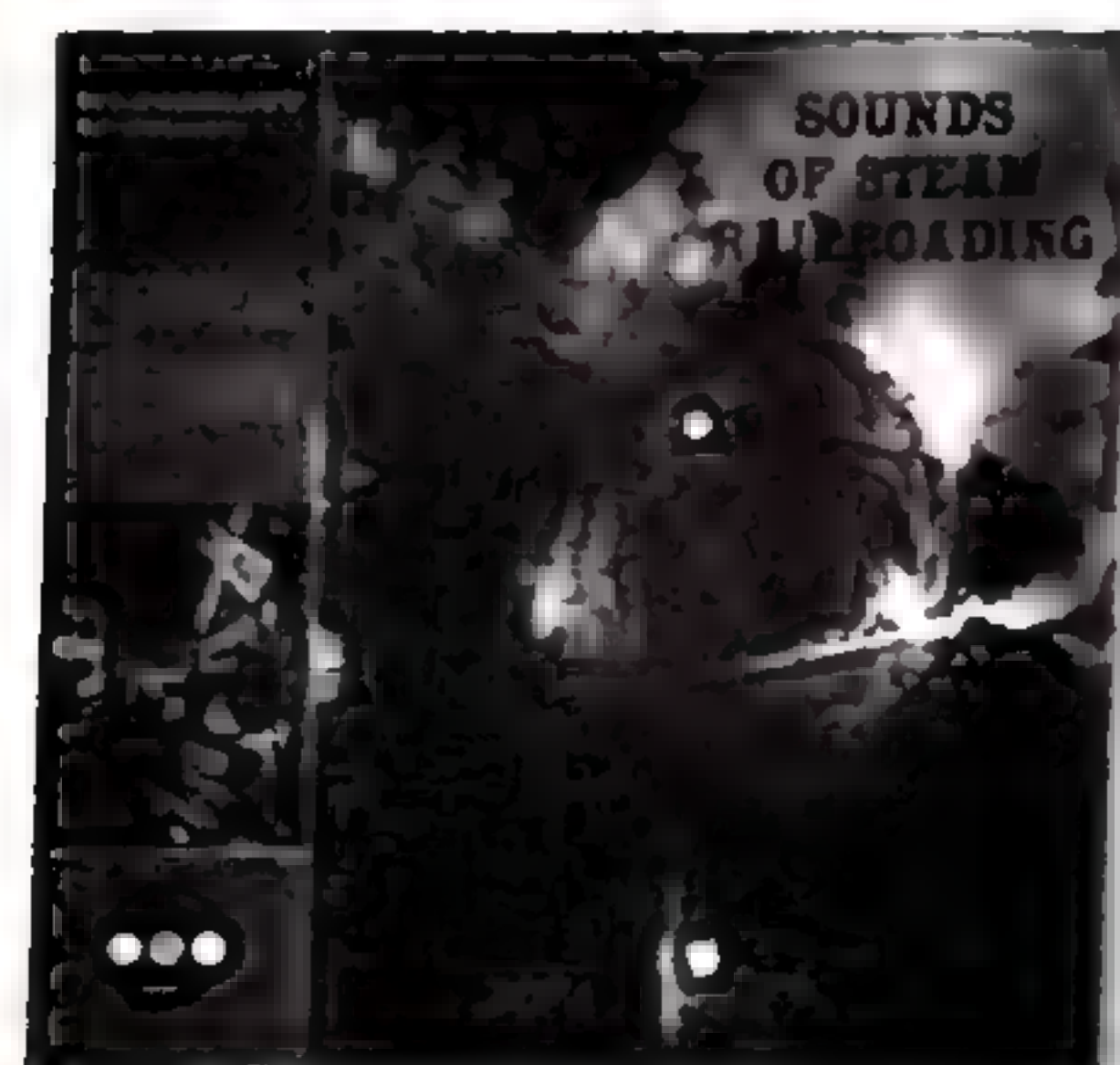
Although Link preferred to photograph trains at night so he could control the lighting, he didn't care when he made the recordings. "The night doesn't seem to make an awful lot of difference. Sometimes the sound might travel a little bit better, because it's damper. Or there is less ambient noise around. All of it is a gamble. If you're there and there are

Link's discography of steam

Unless noted, all titles originally released as 12-inch 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm LP record albums by O. Winston Link Railway Productions.

- Sounds of Steam Railroading, 1957
- The Fading Giant (Sounds of Steam Railroading, Vol. 2), 1958
- Thunder on Blue Ridge (Sounds of Steam Railroading, Vol. 3), 1959
- 2nd Pigeon and the Mockingbird (Sounds of Steam Railroading, Vol. 4), 1961
- Sounds of the Steam Locomotive General (Sounds of Steam Railroading, Vol. 5), 1962; 7-inch 45 rpm
- Mainline to Panther (Sounds of Steam Railroading, Vol. 6S), 1977

Link reissued *The Fading Giant* in 1997 as a 79-minute compact disc, digitally remastered from the original tapes. With a 28-page descriptive booklet containing 26 photos, it is available from O. Winston Link Railway Productions, Roanoke Division, 4920 Buckhorn Rd. SW, Roanoke, VA 24014. Price is \$20 postpaid to U.S. addresses; check or money order only.



trains, you record. Roll after roll. Never let up. That's how you get a lot of good stuff.

"We knew where the sound was going to come from, and the microphones were set accordingly," said Link. "If it was stereo, you had to have a certain distance from the track, and a certain distance apart, which you do by tests. And then stay as far away as possible from the whistle, because that whistle blasts everything to pieces. The dynamic range is great, because all the equipment was the best. The needle just pounded the pin on the red end of the dial.

"I don't know why, everything just worked. A lot of times, if I had to do it again, I would have cut the volume down. The train is so loud; everything else is so weak. The only way is to get the microphones at a good distance from the train."

Editing the tapes in the studio proved to be a tedious process. "Unlike photographic negatives, where one can see the image at a glance, audio tape is anonymous. Finding those intriguing sounds again, back in his studio in New York, took hours of patient work, sorting through thousands of feet, miles really, of fragile tape," says Garver. "Winston's engineering training helped because he made good field notes, but preparing the master tape for a new record was still a task that took incredible stamina, for he had to find and select the few moments of glorious sounds he wanted from all the rest. Sequencing the best sounds then took more time, for Winston's records had themes to them."

Gathering the sounds in the field and then editing them was only part of the challenge. "When it came to making



the records," Link said, "that was another story. But I would stay there with them. I recorded it at such levels that they would have trouble in cutting, because it would overload the cutter head. I would push it to the limit, until they couldn't stand any more. Even today they are amazed at the realism, the dynamic range, on the records. To reproduce that today on the CD is no problem, but then it was. We got really good write-ups, primarily because of the dynamic range.

"We'd get letters from guys saying something was wrong with their record. I would ask, 'Which track is giving trouble?' 'It's the train at Williamson, the coupler action.' Then I would say, 'Your equipment can't handle it. The record is made to take that; you just have to get better equipment.' So after a while I'd get a letter back saying, 'I got some good equipment, and it works.'"

Sound landscapes of a lost world

What did Link capture on sound that would not be possible today on an excursion train? "Certainly the rail joints. I suppose when you sit down and think about it, a number of sounds are trivial, don't amount to much—coupler action, air pumps, and so forth. That's what you don't hear today, and, boy, they are beautiful. We have one record where a light engine is coming back off the mountain. It was pushing a train, and it came back to get into the 'honey hole' at Boaz siding in Vinton. It whistles beautifully, and a cow responds.

"You can pick up an awful lot, but you also have to be aware that there are crickets around, and they can start to sound like dinosaurs. The N&W was full of crickets. Sometimes they got pretty loud. When you were trying to pick up something far away, and there was a cricket right next to you, he sounds terrible."

"A lot of guys would want to go along with me," Link concluded. "They thought I had something magic, all they had



Y6 2150 on a westbound Shenandoah Division time freight passes the station at Waynesboro, Va. (top), after stopping to set out some cars. Link made some of his earliest N&W recordings here.

On an eastbound coal train topping Blue Ridge, a brakeman on the caboose's rear platform gets ready to cut off Y6 pusher 2152 on the fly. The train later broke in two and had to be rescued; the sounds ended up on *Thunder on Blue Ridge*.

'Highball for the Doubleheader'

AS A YOUNG MAN, the great photographer David Plowden worked for Winston Link, from December 1958 until June 1959. They visited the N&W once, in the spring. At 3:40 a.m. April 18, at Boaz, east of Roanoke, they made the photograph Link would call "Highball for the Doubleheader." Like all Link's pictures, "Highball" was the product of extensive preparation. For one thing, the subject, an eastbound time freight, was not usually assigned steam.

"They were pretty well dieselized on the main line by then," Plowden recalls. "This was a doubleheader they ran especially for Link; it was a sort of a farewell present to him."

Link's initial plan was to shoot the engines as they approached, but Plowden thought this might pose a problem.

"You know," he said to Link, "the packings on these engines probably are going to be pretty loose. They're old, being retired. If we shoot straight on, you're going to get nothing but [leaking] steam; you won't see the engine."

Link considered this, and said, "Yeah, you're probably right." So they changed the set-up for a going-away shot, which meant Link, who never left any detail of lighting or composition to chance, had to refigure everything.

"But indeed," says Plowden, "when the engines appeared, they were leaking from all ports possible. If we had shot it head-on, all we'd have gotten was a great cloud of steam."

The oval water sign, necessarily cropped out of this issue's cover, is a distinctive feature. Plowden says Link included it because he felt it indicated there was water in the tender, which made the steam, which made the engines run.

Link doted over other elements of the composition. The crews knew he was set up at that location. Worried that firemen and brakemen might ruin the scene by crowding the gangways to see the spectacle, Link implored the railroad to pass word that only the engineers, looking ahead, were to be visible on the right-hand side. To add further interest, he wanted Plowden to pose by the track—with a red lantern.

"I said, 'I'm not going to stand out there with a red lantern—I'm an old railroader.' Red only means one thing. If somebody holds a red lantern in front of the train, they're going to dump the air." Instead, Link got N&W employee Bill Tanner to hold up a white lantern in a highball gesture.

Plowden also recalls Link arranging and rearranging the



Two A's highball past Link's lights, cameras, and microphones at Boaz.

items in the section-shanty window so they would be just so.

Finally, showtime approached—and what a show it was. "That train . . . I remember it whistling through the night when it started coming up the mountain. It took, I would say, 45 minutes to an hour to get to us. It was going no more than 15 miles an hour, working absolutely flat out, both engines. I mean, it was a hair-raising experience to be right next to the track when these things went by, I tell you."

As the moment neared, Link was "in another zone."

"Link was incredibly nervous . . . because he realized that he had *one shot* and that was it. Here was the railroad that had put on a doubleheader for *him* . . . the last time this would happen. It was his *last chance*—can you imagine the strain on this man? And so I remember him standing there as those engines came. He took a last look down the tracks, then turned and looked the other way. He had predetermined exactly where he was going to fire the shutter, when the N or the O on that second tender passed a certain place.

"So, when that engine passed the spot, Link fired the shutter, and lit up the night."—Robert S. McGonigal

to do was see it and they could make photographs and records. It's just in my head, and in my scales and charts. Page after page of data. The negatives are excellent. The lighting is so beautiful. They are developed right, at the right temperature and the right time. They're not perfect, but you can't find anything wrong with them. They have been trying to duplicate me, and they haven't been able to do it at all. One reason was that I did it all at night," he said with a smile.

Link's recordings initially drew more attention than his photographs. Reviewers, quoted on the jackets, said: "A collector's item if there ever was one"—*St. Louis Globe Democrat*; "One of the standout discs of the year"—*1958 Hi-Fi Guide and Yearbook*; and "Steam railroad record to end them all . . . transients on this record you just won't believe"—*Radio & TV News*.

Although the night photography was more of a challenge than the sound recordings for Link, both have a common theme, which gives them a timeless quality. Certainly, they

reflect Link's careful attention to detail and his lifelong passion for steam locomotives. More importantly, they show, as no one else has, the railroad's place in the everyday life of American communities when mail arrived by rail and "travel by train" still was a household expression. Thus, in Winston Link's recordings you will hear—along with locomotive bells, whistles, and exhaust—people talking, dogs barking, birds singing, and Christmas chimes. ■

Steam envelops Y6 2190, power for the Pigeon Creek Shifter, on March 15, 1960. Link's recordings of the "2nd Pigeon" on this date were his last on the N&W; less than two months later, steam was dead on the Norfolk & Western.

classictrainsmag.com

Hear excerpts from Link's album *The Fading Giant*, plus David Plowden's description of the doubleheaded A's passing Boaz, at classictrainsmag.com



Front-row seat on the

North Shore Line

For a boy in the 1950's, Waukegan's Edison Court station was a great place to watch America's fastest interurban

By Stephen A. Lake

WAUKEGAN, ILL., on the shore of Lake Michigan almost exactly midway between Chicago and Milwaukee, is perhaps best known as the birthplace of comedian Jack Benny. Today Waukegan

is to some extent an example of what might be called a rust-belt city. Much of its industry has been scaled back or closed up, with little to replace it. However, for a kid like me, growing up there in the 1950's, few clouds were on the horizon. Certainly there was no indication that my favorite train-watching venue, the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee Railroad's Edison Court station, was on the verge of extinction.

The North Shore was born in Waukegan in 1895 as the Bluff City Electric Street Railway, with streetcar service between Waukegan, then known as Bluff City, and Lake Bluff, Ill. The line continued to expand toward Milwaukee and Chicago via various routes and road names until in 1916 it became the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee Railroad. In 1926 the Skokie Valley Route, west of the original line, was completed between Waukegan and Chicago, and with interurban magnate Samuel Insull providing funding and direction, the stage was set for some of the finest interurban railroad operations in the world. Awards for excellence and speeds in the vicinity of 90 mph were commonplace.

Even if I had wanted to, the North Shore Line would have been difficult to ignore. Our home was two blocks from the main line, and my route to and from school crossed the tracks on Ridgeland Avenue, about a mile north

of Edison Court. This crossing was manned, and I made periodic stops in the guard's shack to help take the sting out of a Waukegan winter and perhaps watch a train accelerating toward Milwaukee or drifting into Edison Court. In fact, since the trains ran through Waukegan more or less on the hour and almost 'round the clock, they became a time-keeping device for those of us without the benefit of a Timex. The *Electroliners*, particularly, provided good time markers. If I wasn't in school when the first *Electroliner* horn of the day was heard, 9 a.m., I was late. The next one through signaled lunch. What a great way to tell time!

Another factor that entwined my life with the North Shore was that my father commuted for many years to Chicago on it (a mere 1-hour trip—try doing that today!), and my mother would usually pack my siblings and me in the car to pick him up at Edison Court. He wasn't always in a great mood then, but watching the train move out into the evening was more than adequate compensation for me.

Last but not least, my mother developed the habit of taking us to the Loop every year to see the Christmas decorations at Marshall Field's on State Street, and to ride the miniature train at the Fair Store. Of course we took the North Shore, and for me that ride was the highlight of the year. We took a morning train and got on one of the cars waiting on the siding. The rhythmic throb of the air compressors and

In a classic Edison Court scene, an *Electroliner* pauses at the southbound platform. In the siding also served by the platform, "Greenliner" cars wait to be added to another Chicago-bound train.



jolting hook-up to the main train from Milwaukee made for a delightful experience. At the risk of disillusioning my mother, the Christmas stuff was great, but the train ride made the day.

Edison Court station

The focus of the North Shore in Waukegan was Edison Court station. (The name came from the street that ran to the station; another, less-important North Shore station in town was located at County Street.) Since my interest in trains was well established by the time I reached my teens, my wanderings around Waukegan frequently took me there, sometimes by accident but often by design. The station itself was actually rather shabby by North Shore standards. Many of the other stations between Chicago and

Milwaukee were of stout "standard" North Shore design featuring a brick structure with white stone trim and a green tile roof supported by sturdy white columns. Those along the Skokie Valley Route were built in an "Insull Spanish" style that was both functional and attractive. Edison Court, on the other hand, was an all-wood structure painted in, for lack of a better term, North Shore green. Its somewhat less-than-impressive appearance was offset by the fact that it was probably the first major station on the North Shore route, being built around 1905.

The station consisted of low-level wood platforms on either side of the two-track line. The platforms could accommodate about six cars, and roughly half their length was covered on either side. The ticket office was on the

east side of the tracks and was, at best, austere. A good one-word description of it would be "dingy."

The tracks at Edison Court facilitated a variety of operations, both freight and passenger, and provided some great train-watching opportunities. Of course, there was the two-track main line, a superb example of the standards to which most of the North Shore was built. They ran straight—and I do mean *straight*—north and south from the station as far as the eye could see. Memories fade with time, but I don't remember anything that even came close to a kink in that stretch, and the ballast looked liked it was regularly manicured.

One of the features of the Edison Court track plan that intrigued me was the siding on the west side of the west platform. It normally held two or three



M. D. McCARTER COLLECTION



Unlike the North Shore's handsome Prairie- and "Insull Spanish"-style stations, Edison Court was rather plain. Two 1958 views show the northbound side, where the author met trains from Chicago.

passenger cars, either as storage or add-ons for Chicago-bound trains. The siding was at a lower elevation than the main line; since a single platform served both tracks, it was not necessary to step up to enter the cars standing on the siding. This high-level arrangement was similar to the mode of entry from the Chicago "L" platforms, and was absolutely fascinating to me. When my mother took us on our Christmas trip to Chicago, we always got on one of those cars, which was then coupled to the Chicago-bound train when it arrived from Milwaukee.

The other elements of the Edison Court track layout were geared to moving passenger cars into and out of the siding and delivering freight. There was a siding south of the station where several coal silos belonging to Rynskell Coal Company were regularly replenished and another siding north of the station which led to a freight terminal, also of somewhat shabby construction.

A big show, in three acts

I won't pretend that as a teenager I eschewed the pleasures of youth to spend time watching the comings and goings at Edison Court. However, I did try to get over there periodically, and if

my travels got me in the vicinity of the station near the top of the hour, things would definitely be delayed to watch the on-the-hour action. There were three distinct shows at Edison Court, and they can be classified into Greenliner-Silverliner, *Electroliner*, and freight. My favorite by far starred the standard interurban coaches, affectionately called Greenliners and Silverliners, depending on their exterior color.

Jewett Car Company, St. Louis Car Company, Cincinnati Car Company, and Pullman built most of the North Shore's cars over a span of many years. They were all similar in appearance, the most obvious difference being the paint scheme. At the time I started noticing the North Shore, most cars wore the green-and-red livery, although a few were green, gray, and red. Those with the latter scheme were the original Greenliners, but for now I'll include all the "Greens" in that category.

The company conducted a refurbishment program in the 1950's, and many cars had their appearance enhanced through the addition of silver paint meant to resemble stainless-steel fluting, and red trim. These became known as Silverliners. Perhaps it was because we made most of our Christmas trips on the standard cars that my affection for them was so strong.

Many of the trains to which cars were added or subtracted at Edison Court contained combination baggage-

passenger cars. One of my early part-time jobs was as a delivery boy for a local florist, and one of my assignments was to pick up flowers brought in on the North Shore from a distributor in Chicago. It was always exciting to observe the packages being unloaded and, sometimes, the cars being uncoupled under the watchful eye of the motor-man. Time was of the essence in all of this. The workers moved with purpose and efficiency, and they didn't seem to mind my lingering near the baggage wagon until their work was completed and the train on its way.

The *Electroliners* were the flagships of the North Shore. Put into service in 1941, they were sleek, smooth-riding and, since they were air-conditioned, comfortable year-round. (The same could not be said of the standard coaches, in which open windows provided the only air-conditioning.) In addition, dining-car facilities were available on them. This was not new, since dining cars had been used on the older coach trains, but most of these were out of service by the mid-1940's.

But *Electroliner* action at Edison Court was not very exciting for me. Since the trains were articulated, there was no coupling or uncoupling of cars. Also, there were no baggage-freight spaces on them, so the stop at Edison Court was limited to getting passengers off and on. Certainly the *Electroliners* were impressive, but their specialized





TWO PHOTOS: WAUKEGAN NEWS-SUN

function, getting people rapidly and comfortably from one point to another, detracted from the aura of "railroading" that surrounded the older coaches.

Freight operations were of little interest to me. I do remember periodically seeing the steeple-cabs and four-truck articulated freight motors rumble into the station, either with a through freight or in the process of maneuvering cars to the coal silos or the freight terminal. These were merely side-shows, although freight did account for nearly 14 percent of the North Shore's revenues. Passenger service was what Edison Court was all about, and the same applied to me.

Farewell

In 1959, I left for college and more or less lost contact with Edison Court. It wasn't that I went far away to school. In fact, if the North Shore's old Shore Line route had still existed, I could have taken it on my trips to and from Northwestern University. As it was, Chicago & North Western's bi-level commuter trains better fit my needs, and the North Shore receded in memory. There were signs that the North Shore was in trouble, but to my uninformed eyes the trains seemed to be running close to full—and who would ever want to do away with a system

that all but guaranteed 2 hours, 5 minutes between Chicago and Milwaukee? How little I knew!

The curtain came down on the North Shore and Edison Court on January 21, 1963. I heard the news as I drove to work as a co-op student at Allis-Chalmers in Deerfield, Ill. It never entered my mind to ride the last train in those early-morning hours of that bitter-cold night, or to at least get over to Edison Court for some photographs. To be honest, I really didn't believe it would happen and suspected the trains would be running again in a few days or weeks. There had been strikes resulting in train stoppages before. Surely this, like those events, would get resolved and the trains would soon be

rolling again. Complete abandonment just couldn't happen, I thought.

Edison Court station is now nothing more than a memory, of course. The right of way there has been converted to a bike trail, and there is not even a mention, at least in Waukegan, of the railroad on the signs for the trail. It's simply the "Robert McClory Bike Trail." All traces of the station are gone, and one would be hard pressed to believe that some serious railroad action once took place on that spot. But as I walk along the trail there I can still sense the presence of those awesome cars, the arrow-straight tracks, and the sights, sounds, and smells that induced a young kid to dawdle a bit before loading those flowers on his delivery truck. ■



In a recent northward view, an electric power line is the only hint of an interurban at Edison Court.

STEPHEN A. LAKE

Last of the prairie mixeds

In 1964, milk cans outnumbered passengers on a Soo Line combine

By Bob Johnston • Photos by the author

THICK FOG had been burning off for a couple of hours after sunrise on that Thursday in early July 1964. All was quiet at the main railroad station in Bismarck, N.Dak. Northern Pacific's overnight local No. 3 from

St. Paul wouldn't arrive until later in the morning, soon to be followed by east-bound No. 2, the *Mainstreeter* from Seattle, two of six NP passenger trains serving North Dakota's state capital on most days. But a couple of blocks away, things were bustling at the city's other terminus, a stub-end, two-story, red-brick affair owned by the Soo Line.

Here the thick air was spiked with an unmistakable dairy scent, the smell of fresh milk dominating a potpourri of agricultural fragrances drifting into the city from surrounding fields. It didn't take long to figure out where the aroma was coming from. Out on the platform were several turn-of-the-century baggage carts loaded with shiny milk cans tagged for the Beaver Valley Creamery in Wishek, N.Dak., 79 miles to the east. The carts were positioned in front of two vintage Soo heavyweight combination coach-baggage cars.

The interiors of these 12-wheel maroon monsters were split about equally between a passenger compartment, with brown vinyl walkover seats, and the merchandise area, labeled "Railway Express Agency" on the outside. A potbelly stove, its jaunty stovepipe pointing skyward, was centrally positioned to heat the coffee and take the chill off of people on windswept winter days should the car, which was equipped with steam lines, be isolated from the locomotive, or should the assigned diesel not have a steam-generating boiler.

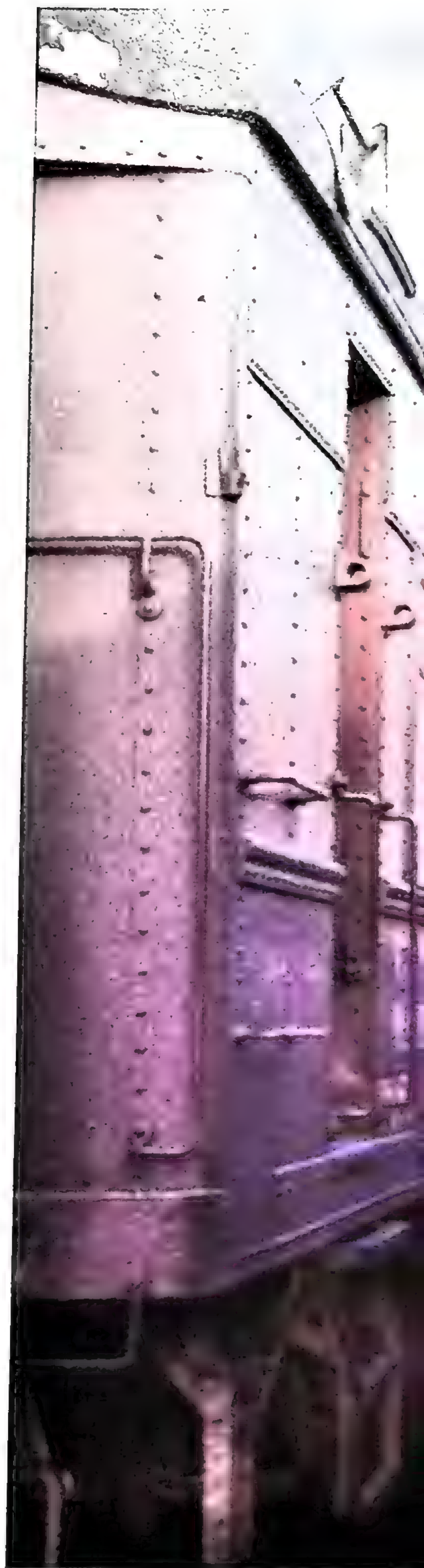
The venerable cars would soon rumble off in different directions to junction towns on Soo's transcontinental route, its main line linking Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul with Portal, N.Dak. Portal was the point on the Saskatchewan border where connection was made with parent Canadian Pacific for Calgary and Vancouver. One combine would bring up the rear of Soo train 92 to Drake, 140 miles north, while the other would carry the markers of train 76—and us three visiting railfans—to Hankinson, 216 miles east.

These locals were 2 of 18 mixed trains Soo Line still fielded in 1964 in North Dakota to fulfill a mandate by the state's regulatory commission to maintain passenger service wherever the railroad operated. Even Drake and Hankinson were linked directly by mainline locals operated as mixeds, although the 214-mile westward trip required two 18-hour layovers, at the division points of Enderlin and Harvey. That accommodation had been instigated upon the discontinuance of trains 13-14, the St. Paul-Portal coach-and-sleeper remnant of the through Soo-CP *Mountaineer*.

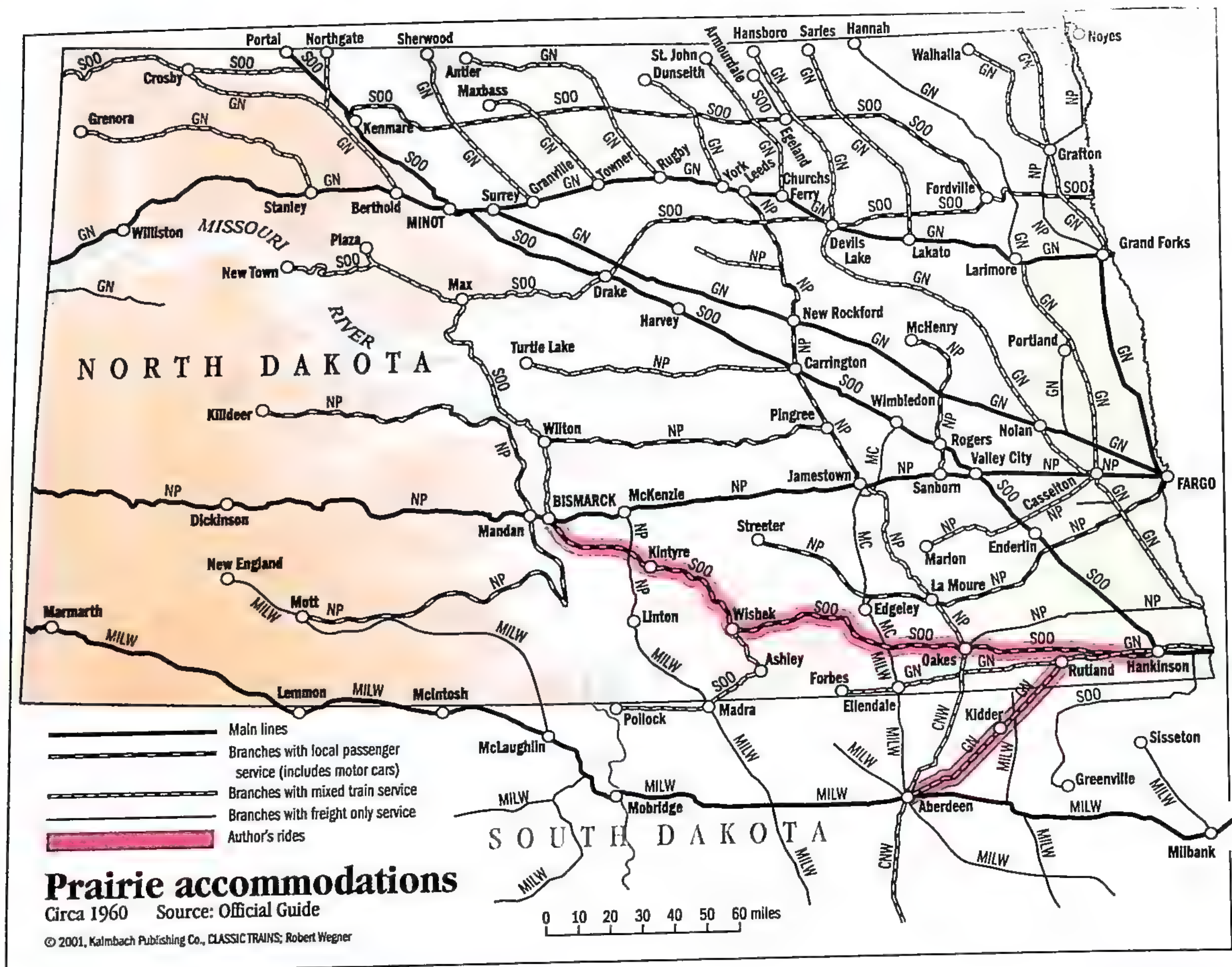
Otherwise, the passenger-accommodation railroad map of North Dakota hadn't changed much since 1960 [page 40]. In the interim, only a half dozen branches—of Great Northern, NP, and Soo—in the state had lost even mixed-train service, although the situation wouldn't last much longer.

"Don't bother getting up too early. You won't leave until after 8," a hostler had offered the previous afternoon at the three-stall roundhouse where Alco

Soo Line's Bismarck depot was bustling with activity. The maroon combines would head off in opposite directions, to Hankinson and Drake, N.Dak.









When Alco 372 sputtered and died 40 miles out on the prairie, the crew gathered in the combine to play poker awaiting the Bismarck mechanic.

RS3 372 and an EMD F unit cooled their heels after arriving with the inbound mixed. The schedule in *The Official Guide of the Railways* said train 76 to Hankinson was scheduled to depart at 6:30 a.m., but the Soo Line's public passenger timetable didn't bother to detail any of its service in and out of Bismarck, perhaps because the carrier was too embarrassed to admit the trains were anything more than local freights with a combine instead of a caboose.

Of course, that was the allure that had attracted me, fellow Chicagoan Gerry Widemark, and Dave Korkhouse, a mutual friend from South Bend, Ind., out here onto the prairies in the first place. It was one thing to complete an exotic itinerary just to get to Bismarck, but quite another to sample the branchline railroading still available in this sparsely populated land.

Exotic? Our conveyances to Bismarck from Chicago had been Soo's *Laker* from the Windy City to Owen, Wis.; its connecting through coach to St. Paul; and NP's *Mainstreeter*, with a side trip in between from St. Paul down to Dodge Center, Minn., on the Chicago Great Western. After hitchhiking from Hankinson up to Fargo, we would return to Chicago on the GN-CB&Q *Empire Builder*.

The branchline world into which we were about to embark had remained essentially unchanged since 1898, when



John H. Wishek convinced the Soo Line in Minneapolis to spike its rails through his settlement on the way to Bismarck. Back then, the Soo, GN, NP, Milwaukee Road, Chicago & North Western, and their predecessors had crisscrossed their way into the Dakotas to put tracks only a day's wagon ride away from most farms. Spindly rail capillaries helped supply mainline arteries with freight and passenger sustenance on the Great Plains just as branches had done elsewhere throughout the country. But here in the Dakotas, the light population density rarely warranted more than a single train for both human cargo and commodities, except at harvest time. Generally, the trains operated daily except Sunday. Even back in 1933, the two Soo Line trains between Bismarck and Hankinson (one round trip operated 3 days a week) were both mixed.

Off among the waving grasses

"Tickets? You don't need any tickets," No. 76's overalled conductor advised us

on the platform as his brakeman coupled up the three tank cars and a boxcar we would be hauling out of town. Milk cans would outnumber passengers by about 5 to 1; no one else would be riding today. "The [Interstate Commerce Commission-regulated] tariffs for this milk business are real cheap," explained the conductor, one of five crewmen on No. 76. "That's the main reason we haul so much of it." After a quick stretch of coupler slack and an air-brake test, the burbling Alco and its five cars bounded away from Bismarck through waving prairie grass. (Of note to diesel fans, our Alco, Soo 372, was built in 1950 as a model RSC3 with "A1A" trucks for light-rail branches; it was freshly re-equipped with "B" trucks just four months before our ride, in March 1964, making it look like a regular RS3.)

The heavy combine seemed as comfortable on the light rail out here as its full-length coach cousins had on the *Laker* back in Wisconsin, with only a moderate bounce over road crossings.

Back-to-back combines meeting at the Wishek depot belong to the Pollock turn (at right), behind F3A 203A, and our Bismarck-Hankinson train 76.



The morning was heating up quickly, but a breezy crosswind and open windows kept everything cool inside; the fresh air was exhilarating. Now, if we'd only done this about 15 years earlier when coal smoke and chuffing sounds would have been a part of the mix . . .

Such daydreaming would have to wait, though. About 40 miles out, approaching a slight rise west of Kintyre, we started slowing. The brakeman and conductor looked out the window, then at each other, and put down their newspapers . . . as we rolled to a halt. The burbling up front had stopped. Silence. Now it was just the sound of the wind and some cows protesting from a nearby pasture. After not much more than an hour's run, the 372 had died, and neither the train's engineer nor fireman could get the old girl cranking, so a crewman hiked over to the nearest telephone pole and tapped into the dispatcher's line to relay the bad news.

Not to worry. Although the nearest locomotive, we were told, was the unit leading train 80 up a branch from Pollock, S.Dak., rattling toward a rendezvous with 76 at Wishek 30 miles ahead of us, a mechanic from the diminutive Bismarck roundhouse was on his way. Without missing a beat, the crew set the hand brakes, then retreated to the combine for an impromptu game of poker.

Whether it was a battery- or fuel-induced failure was unknown, but after an hour of waiting and another half hour of tinkering by the mechanic, the Alco coughed to life and 76 was on the move again, much to the relief of the curious cows. After picking up more milk cans at a rural outpost and another hour of bobbing and weaving across the prairie, our east-bound mixed swung around a curve into Wishek, where

Oakes was down
from eight
passenger-carrying
trains to two, and
less than a year
later they would be
gone, too.

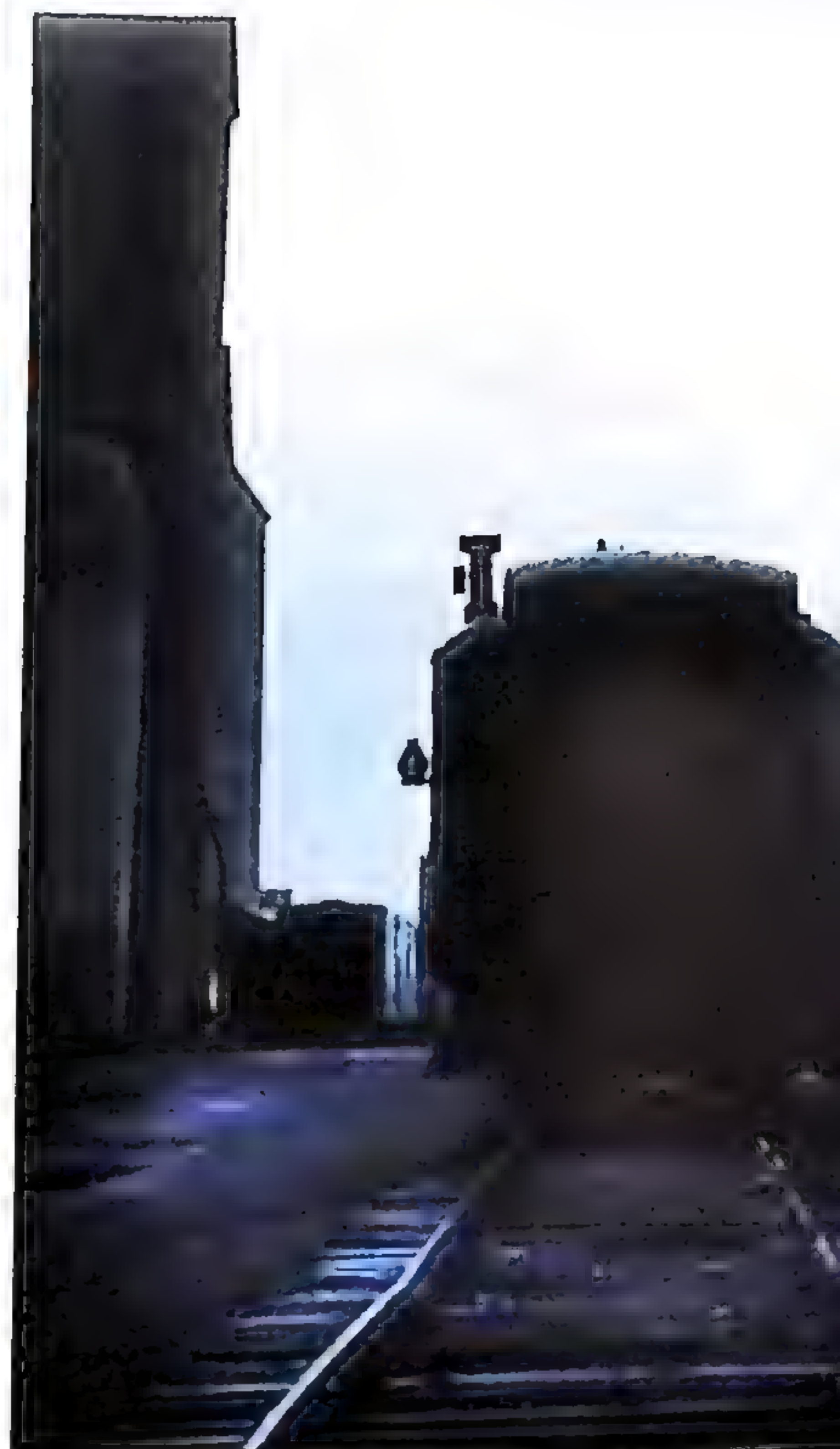
Soo 76's brakeman douses the journal-box fire. GN 326 (right) meets the local from Forbes at Rutland, N.Dak., as a summer storm blows in.

westbound counterpart 75 and the Pollock turn had the station-track switches lined for our tardy arrival. More milk cans were loaded, but again no other passengers, as the crew switched out the three tank cars for the South Dakota branch train and picked up a couple of wooden boxcars and a gondola of scrap metal the Pollock turn had left on the interchange track in front of the station.

After a snack for us passengers and a crew change, 76 was off again to the east, with a set-out for the grain elevator at Lehr and a pickup at Fredonia. But a stretch of sustained running after those stops brought out the worst in one of 76's newly acquired wooden boxcars. The engineer spotted a wisp of smoke about four cars back and sounded a stop signal, but by the time the brakeman ran forward from the combine, flames were licking out of a journal box on the trailing truck.

Armed with a long poker, he deftly flipped up the faceplate, then jammed the metal tong into the flames to extract oily waste that had ignited from the overheated bearing. Flames lapped at the car's wooden side panels for 10 seconds or so, which seemed like an eternity to us observers, but gradually they were subdued. The car was set out and 76 was under way again, but not before an old lesson of period railroading was re-learned: when non-roller-bearing cars sit for a long time, you better make sure there's enough oil in the journal boxes.

Sunlight streamed in through the rear vestibule, reflecting off the tops of the seatbacks as the Alco picked its way between windmills



and barbed-wire fences. As we enjoyed the reverie, it was easy to visualize travelers sitting in the same car 20, 30, or 40 years earlier, perhaps talking about the latest wheat prices or the weather while wiping cinders out of their hair and clothes.

On this trip, no one got on or off at Oakes, but as late as 1952, eight mixed trains from three railroads converged on, or departed from, this Great Plains junction town of 1800 people. Oakes had rail links not only to Bismarck and Hankinson on the Soo, but to Jamestown, N.Dak., and Staples, Minn., on NP, and Aberdeen and Huron, S.Dak., on C&NW. Some were mixeds, some were motor-car "doodlebugs." Making mainline connections to or from these puddle-jumpers may have entailed arduous nocturnal waits, but at least there was train service, and "you could get there from here" without a car. Now Oakes had only Soo 75 and 76 and freights, and less than a year later Soo's accommodations would be gone too.



A South Dakota farewell

A year later, in August 1965, we were back in the region for another branch-line ride. This time, we drove up in Gerry's car, and friend Rick Burn joined us. Having the car was handy, as it enabled us to chase as well as ride the trains.

Great Northern hadn't gotten around to turning all of its elderly combines out to pasture, so there was still time for pilgrims to ride train 326, which (with westward counterpart 325) in early 1966 would ring down the mixed-train curtain in South Dakota. They operated between Aberdeen, S.Dak., and Breckenridge, Minn., a town on GN's Minneapolis-Willmar-Fargo main line across the river from Wahpeton, N.Dak. The GN mixeds were almost the state's last rail passenger service, an honor which went to Milwaukee 15 and 16, the Minneapolis-Aberdeen coach-only remnant of the *Olympian Hiawatha* which came off soon after its Railway Post Office was discontinued in October 1968.

This time there was actually another

passenger along, a woman traveling from Aberdeen to the Twin Cities, but the mood was just as laid-back as the Soo trip a year earlier. Train 326, officially carded out of Aberdeen at 3:25 p.m. for the 140-mile trek, would stop for 15 or 20 minutes at each town where it needed to switch at grain elevators, lumber mills, or cement plants, leaving the coach on the main until all the work was done.

Still, when the car would slowly creak ahead, there was a sense of adventure about what was around the next bend. A summer storm blew in off the prairie as the mixed shuffled into Rutland, N.Dak., for a rendezvous with the local from Forbes, 63 miles due west. Soon 326 would be off into the misty night to Breckenridge, where the "real" passenger would be able to step out of the past and onto the *Empire Builder*.

Accoutrements of another era—train-order boards at stations, telephone pole-driven communication, baggage carts, five-man crews, and the oily waste that

packed journal boxes—were still around when North Dakota's mixed trains ran off their last miles in the late '60's. But these artifacts, too, would all disappear shortly thereafter. Today the Soo branch to Pollock is gone, and the initials on the locomotives that jounce their way on the freight once or twice a week from Bismarck to Hankinson read "DMVW" for Dakota, Minnesota Valley & Western.

"I still think of it as the Soo Line," volunteered Wishek Mayor Jonna H. Hochhalter in 1999, granddaughter of the man who got the railroad to come through town. "Three creameries closed here in the '60's, but our livestock market, Wishek Steel, and the grain elevators are going strong, although the population is down to 1125 from about 1400 in the '30's." The mayor remembers when the maroon cars disappeared. "We all fought to keep the train on, but it was always so much faster to drive. You know, it's too bad I never rode it."

For those of us who did, the memories are priceless. **1**

When the Havana Special came to town

At North Charleston, S.C., in the 1930's, the daily arrival of Atlantic Coast Line's crack train was a big event

By Louis D. Rubin Jr. • Photo by the author

DURING MY CHILDHOOD in Charleston, S.C., there were three railroads in town: the Atlantic Coast Line, the Southern Railway, and the Seaboard Air Line. In those days I judged the importance of railroads by the relative magnificence of their passenger trains, and there was no question that the Coast Line was supreme.

Charleston lay on a peninsula, and so magisterial was the Coast Line that the *Havana Special* and its other crack trains did not even deign to come all the way down into town, but only paused briefly at the North Charleston station en route between Florida and New York City.

On Sunday afternoons in the mid-1930's, when we went for automobile drives in the country, we sometimes stopped to watch the *Havana Special* come in. When we first arrived in the parking lot, there might be only one or two automobiles outside the station. My sister and brother and I would walk up the tracks beyond the highway viaduct several hundred feet to the north of the station and into a stand of pine trees, or else pull each other around on one of the baggage carts parked alongside the tracks.

Gradually the parking lot filled up with cars. There was activity in and about the station, with its ivied concrete exterior and overhanging roof. A bus pulled into the parking lot, and out came the uniformed musicians of the

Jenkins Orphanage Band, an array of black youths bearing assorted horns and drums, as they walked up the tracks to position themselves. Soon they began performing, while one youngster, small and with an oversize visored hat, conveyed the beat with his baton. Several others of similar size, their upturned hats extended, moved along the tracks where people were beginning to gather.

Inside the waiting room, the telegraph instruments kept up a steady clicking behind the ticket windows, contributing a staccato chatter to a building sense of anticipation as train time approached. The mail clerks began trundling their baggage carts, heaped high with gray asbestos sacks, well along the tracks to where the forward end of the train would stop.

You really could be sure the train was coming soon when a pair of long, ancient, dark blue buses, with leather seats and rows of doors on the sides, rolled into the station from the city. They pulled up in front of the ticket office and began discharging outbound passengers and luggage. Now redcaps with hand-trucks stacked with suitcases moved up to trackside to where the Pullmans would stop, followed by the travelers who would board the train.

We looked far up the right of way, where the double

track converged in a haze at the horizon, for a sign of smoke. Was the blur over the space above the roadbed and the low line of trees on either side an indication that the train was soon to appear, or no more than dust and afternoon heat rising from the rails? We trained our vision on the spot to make something of what we saw, but there was no change.

Off to the west, we could hear the whistle of a locomotive on the Southern tracks, out of sight a mile or more away. But this was the Coast Line, and this was the *Havana Special* that would soon be arriving from New York City.

There was smoke. Definitely so: a smudge staining the sky above the tracks. A minute, and then within it, on the horizon, a dot. As it grew larger, it materialized into a moving shape and a plume of black smoke and came toward us, still far up the line but headed in our direction. Then it became plainly a locomotive, with a headlight

in the center of its cylindrical smokebox, bell above, and the pilot and coupler below. As it drew closer, we could see that there were not one but two locomotives: a doubleheader, twin 4-6-2 Pacifics, glossy black, their driving wheels stroking in unison and gray smoke fanning from their stacks. The engines approached, rolling underneath the viaduct and into the station area.

Then the engines were upon and past us, their high driving wheels turning over, steam hissing from the pistons, the bell overhead clanging.



Looking not unlike the *Havana Special* at North Charleston, two ACL Pacifics head up a southbound mail-and-express train at Richmond, Va., in 1947.

Then they were upon and past us, their high driving wheels turning over, white steam hissing from the pistons, the revolving bell overhead clanging, then the broad firebox and cab of the leading locomotive, the fireman gazing down nonchalantly as he swung by high above us. Then came the second locomotive, equally consequential, the ground beneath our feet vibrating from its force. Then the baggage and mail cars, and some day coaches, and a dining car with fogged galley windows, and a lounge, and more coaches, and another dining car, and then the string of Pullman sleeping cars.

Below the coaches, the brakeshoes shot sparks as they bit into the wheels, filling the air with a hot, acrid smell that tempered the odor of steam as the 18-car train slowed to a crawl and, finally, to a stop. Train 75, the southbound *Havana Special*, had arrived at North Charleston, bearing travelers from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond.

The Pullman porters opened the vestibule doors, handed luggage to the redcaps, then opened the heavy steel trapdoors over the steps. Porters leaned out of the vestibules, wiped the handrails clean, positioned their stepboxes, stepped down, and began helping the disembarking passengers onto the platform. "Stand back, please!" they called to the clusters of people who had gathered around the vestibule doors. For the next few minutes there was excitement: inbound travelers were greeted and embraced, hand luggage was claimed, gratuities were bestowed upon the porters, and suitcases stacked on hand-trucks by redcaps.

One after another, arriving passengers and those who had come to greet them moved away toward the station. It was time for the outbound passengers to climb aboard, and those who came to see them off waved good-bye. Women touched handkerchiefs to their eyes. As the travelers moved inside the cars to find their assigned accommodations, their families and friends walked along the side of the Pullmans, peering up at the windows, and upon spotting those they were seeing off, stood below

to pantomime last-minute reminders and farewells.

Quiet descended upon the station area. Off to one side, the Jenkins Band continued to tootle away. Most of the inbound passengers and their welcomers had left trackside and now waited at the baggagemaster's shed for checked luggage, or else proceeded toward automobiles, taxis, and buses. There were still a few people gathered below the Pullman and coach windows, but the porters and trainmen, their responsibilities completed, waited near the vestibules. From the head end, the mail clerk, having delivered the outgoing postal sacks, pulled a baggage cart heaped with sacks of incoming mail along the track toward the station.

Outside a vestibule door, the Pullman conductor, pocket watch in hand, gazed up the tracks. Waving a white card above his head, he signaled toward the head end. Moments later, from the train conductor up ahead came a call: "Boaaaaarrrrrddd!"

"All aboard!" the Pullman conductor shouted in response, and stepped up into the vestibule. The porters retrieved their stepboxes, climbed up into the train, and a series of bangs ensued as the metal traps slammed into place and the doors closed over them.

The coaches drifted back several inches as the air-brakes disengaged, then eased forward decisively. The train began to roll, at first slowly, then more powerfully. Before long, the coaches were rolling past us. The last Pullman swept by, and abruptly there was open space over the tracks. We watched down the way as the train moved off, twin red marker lamps mounted on the rear vestibule. Up ahead, the Pacifics now swung into full view, side rods stroking in unison and black smoke belching from their stacks as they rolled into the wide curve to the west and then disappeared from sight behind a bluff, bound for Savannah and points south.

We walked along the now-quiet trackside and past the ticket office. Inside it, the telegraph receivers continued to click. The last of the downtown buses was leaving the station. The Jenkins Band bus departed. Only a few automobiles remained in the parking lot. Our parents waited in one of them. We climbed into the back seat of the car, and my father drove homeward. ■

This article is excerpted from the author's book, A Memory of Trains: The Boll Weevil and Others, published in 2000 by the University of South Carolina Press. Reprinted with permission.

Gallery

Photo Classics





Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range 2-8-8-4 Yellowstone type No. 237 heads out of the yards at Proctor, Minn., with empty iron-ore cars on May 27, 1957. Beyond the strings of loaded ore cars, three ex-Bessemer 2-10-4's and a couple of smaller engines are lined up in storage. Simmering at the big coal dock are another 2-10-4, an ex-Union Railroad 0-10-2, and an 0-10-0. So big were the 2-8-8-4's that the Missabe equipped them with bells on the engine *and* the tender. *Al Chione photo*



Dressed for duty on steam, a Pennsylvania Railroad engineman sits at the imposing controls of a Baldwin model DR-12-8-1500/2 diesel—a “Centipede”—in May 1947. Prominent in this view are cab-signal and train-phone apparatus supplied by Union Switch & Signal Co. Built as two-unit sets for top passenger runs, the 6000 h.p. BP60's (as PRR called them) were soon downgraded and put into helper, freight, and hump service as BH50's. *US&S photo*



Photo Classics





At Dearborn Station, Chicago, two Monon F3's head in to couple onto their train, the *Tippecanoe* for Indianapolis. It's still early—No. 11 is due out at 8:55 a.m.—but it looks like this July 1955 day will be a hot one: note the switchtender in pith helmet and T-shirt by the far unit. Alco RS1's of station owner Chicago & Western Indiana mingle with Santa Fe, Wabash, Erie, and Grand Trunk Western cars (Chicago & Eastern Illinois also used Dearborn).
Dan Pope collection

Two of Northern Pacific's biggest in steam—2-8-8-4 Yellowstone 5002 and 4-6-6-4 Challenger 5146—while the day away inside NP's Livingston (Mont.) roundhouse. Built in 1928 and '30, NP's 12 Yellowstones were impressive, but didn't live up to their potential. Indeed, when the road needed more big power, it turned to the Challenger, buying 50 between 1936 and '44.
Don Sims photo



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Photo Classics





Just past the halfway point on its Boston-Troy (N.Y.) run, Boston & Maine train 57 pauses at Greenfield, Mass., for 30 minutes. It's June 1956, and the traditional B&M on view here is being swept away: Patrick B. McGinnis has just become president; blue is replacing maroon on rolling stock; and B&M will soon run its last passenger train to Troy. *John Buchanan photo; R. R. Wallin collection*

'Most powerful passenger

Despite Rio Grande's boast for its three-cylinder 4-8-2's, they had lackluster careers

By Robert A. Le Massena

SAW OFF THE FRONT of a Union Pacific 4-12-2 behind the fourth set of driving wheels; do likewise with a Southern Pacific 4-10-2 ahead of its firebox. Now, weld the two segments together to produce a three-cylinder 4-8-2, weighing 419,000 pounds.

This monstrous locomotive, built from scratch in 1926, had the same boiler diameter, grate area, boiler pressure, and driving-wheel diameter of the UP and SP engines. It was equipped with a Worthington type BL feedwater heater, and two compound air pumps, but lacked a trailing-truck booster. Driving-axle loads were enormous, and the mechanical stoker was placed on the tender to minimize the load on the trailing axle. Having a rated tractive effort of 75,000 pounds, and classified M-75, the actual locomotive was pro-

claimed by the Denver & Rio Grande Western, its owner, to have been "The Most Powerful Passenger Locomotive in the World."

Passenger locomotive? That designation requires some explanation, so let's go back to 1910, when the Western Pacific was completed between Salt Lake City and Oakland, Calif. The Denver & Rio Grande thus became the link between the Missouri Pacific at Pueblo, Colo., and the WP at Salt Lake City. As traffic over the new route developed, the D&RG acquired six 4-6-2's for its top passenger train, the *Scenic Limited*, and 14 2-8-2's for fast-freight service. Baldwin Locomotive Works constructed these engines in 1912, and the next year American Locomotive Company (Alco) delivered 16 big 2-8-8-2 Mallets for heavy freight and helper service.

In 1918 the D&RG entered bankruptcy, and was obliged to handle World

War I traffic without any new motive power except for 10 ponderous 2-10-2's delivered by Alco in 1916. When the road was reorganized as the D&RGW in 1921, the new management began to acquire larger locomotives to use on passenger and freight trains on the Denver-Pueblo-Grand Junction-Salt Lake City Royal Gorge Route main line (this being before the construction of the Dotsero Cutoff, which provided a more direct route west of Denver via the Moffat Tunnel). The first of these, 10 immense 4-8-2's numbered 1501-1510, were built by Alco in 1922. Weighing 396,000 pounds, they were at the time the heaviest 4-8-2's erected. These locomotives performed well, and the Rio Grande soon purchased 20 more, 10 of which had trailing-truck boosters. With a 78,000-pound tractive effort, the 10 booster-equipped engines were more powerful than most 2-6-6-2 Mallets.

The 1500's hauled freight and passenger trains with equal facility up the D&RGW's long grades. But their 63-inch drivers limited their speed when running downhill. Consequently, the motive-power department began to search for a locomotive which had the tractive effort of the booster-equipped



locomotive in the world'

4-8-2's and the speed capability of the 4-6-2's. Working together, designers at Alco and the railroad concluded that a more powerful and faster locomotive was not practical for a two-cylinder configuration because the boiler pressure could not be increased enough to reduce the cylinder diameter and the weight of the reciprocating parts. There remained, however, the possibility of a satisfactory design with a three-cylinder arrangement.

Alco had begun to produce three-cylinder locomotives in 1922, and during 1925 it had built 4-10-2's for the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific. Simultaneously, it had begun design work on a 4-12-2 for the UP. Apparently these three-cylinder projects attracted the D&RGW's attention, and specifications were drawn for a 4-8-2 sharing many of these engines' traits. Indeed, with the same driving-wheel size (67 inches), the same boiler diameter (92 inches), and slightly lower boiler pressure (210 vs. 220 psi), the Rio Grande engine was almost identical to the UP's. The firebox, with a larger grate area (95 vs. 90 square feet) and trailing truck had been adapted from the SP 4-10-2. There was one major difference:

the average axle load for the 4-12-2 was 60,000 pounds; for the 4-8-2, it was a track-crushing 72,000 pounds.

By adopting the three-cylinder arrangement, the Rio Grande was able to obtain all that it desired, albeit with higher axle loadings, which didn't appear to bother anyone other than the track-maintenance department. The locomotive's rated (calculated) tractive effort was 75,000 pounds, but because of the superior torque of three cylinders, the effective drawbar pull was at least 80,000 pounds. Drawbar horsepower had been increased to 3000 in the 30-35 mph range, which was sufficient for pulling a 16-car, 1000-ton passenger train up a 1.4 percent grade, which was Rio Grande's typical ruling grade (as opposed to its helper grades, which ranged from 2.0 to 3.0 percent).

Despite the fact that Rio Grande's new 4-8-2 was inspired by two Alco projects, and that Alco was the leading U.S. proponent of three-cylinder design, Alco did not get the order to build the big Mountain types. Instead, they came from Baldwin's plant at Eddystone,

Pa.—engines 1600-1604 in May, 1605-1607 in June, and 1608-1609 in July.

Several questions surround these 10 locomotives:

1) How did Baldwin obtain the order for these engines when it had little three-cylinder experience?

2) Why was the feedwater heater changed from Worthington (open system) to Elesco (closed system) halfway through the order?

3) Why wasn't the two-lever Gresley valve gear used for the middle cylinder?

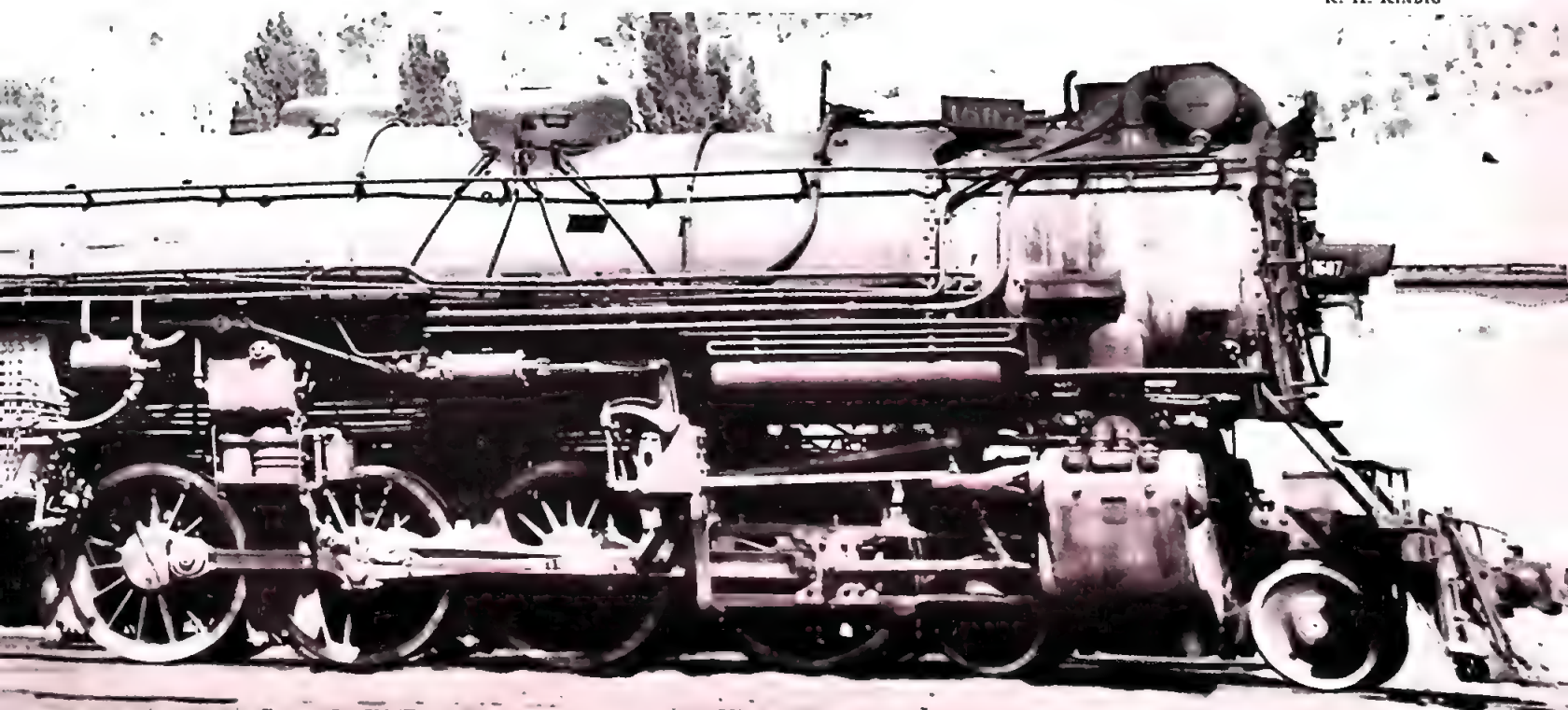
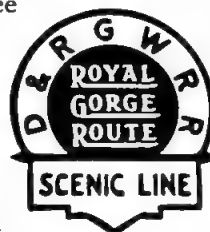
4) Why wasn't a four-wheel trailing truck used to reduce the load on the trailing axle?

The answers are not known, but some conjectures may disclose some insight:

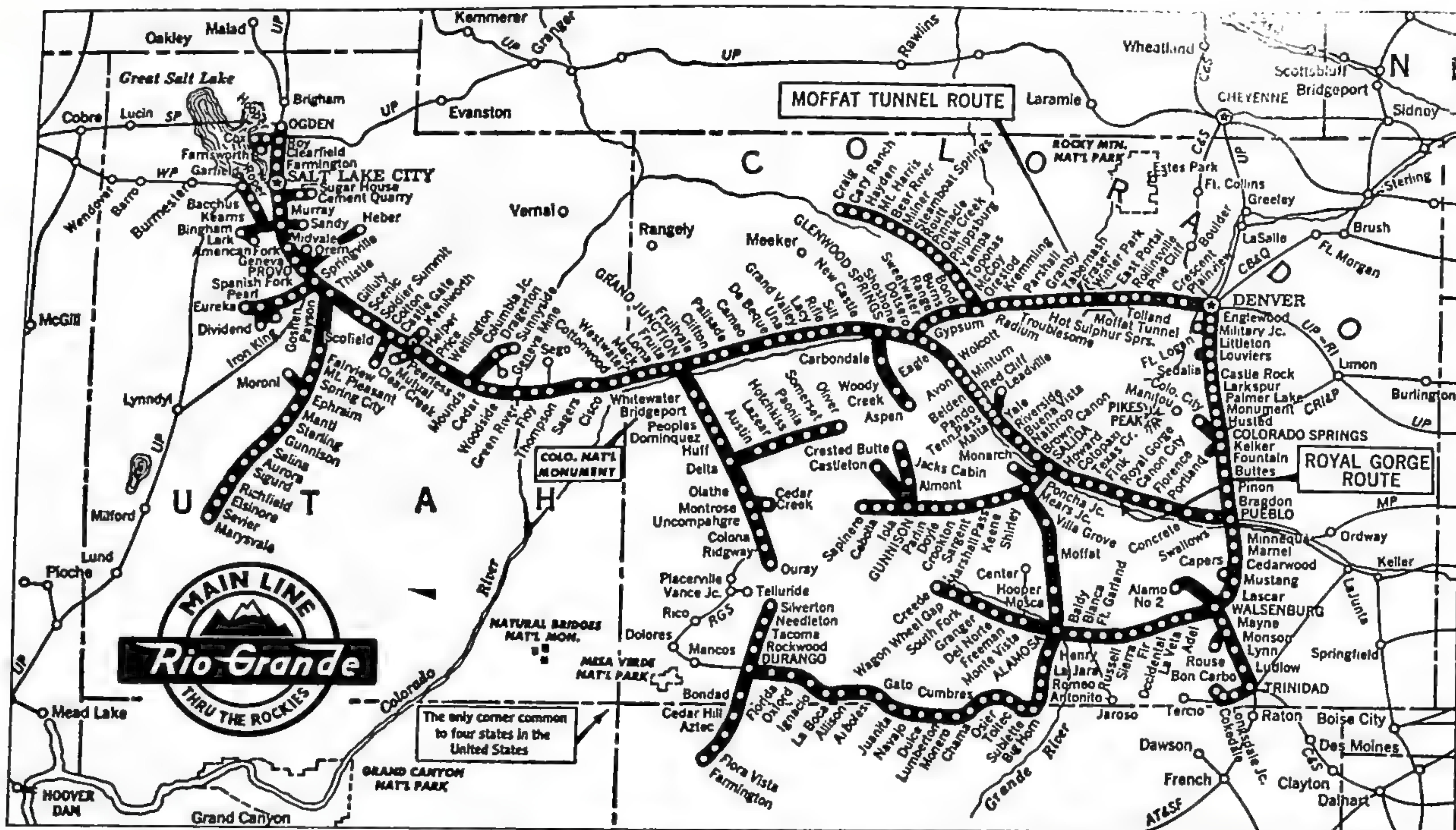
1) Baldwin was known to offer confidential discounts to obtain orders, and may have used this tactic to land the Rio Grande job.

2) With their application to engines 1605-1609, Elesco feedwater heaters

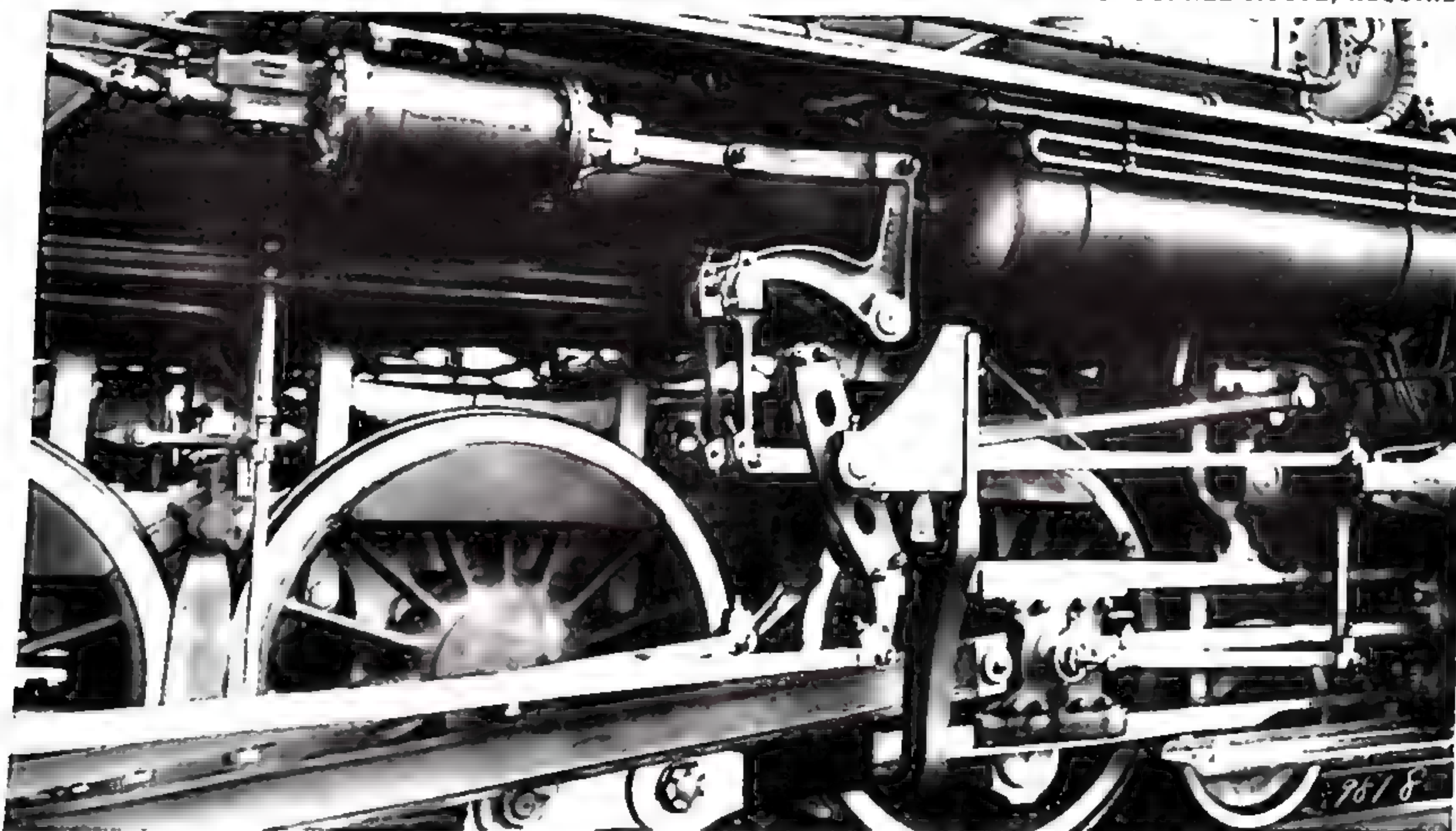
Her *Scenic Limited* assignments a decade behind her, D&RGW three-cylinder Mountain type 1607 suns herself at Helper, Utah, on June 28, 1939.



R. H. KINDIG



A 1949 MAP SHOWS D&RGW'S ROYAL GORGE ROUTE AND THE MOFFAT TUNNEL ROUTE, ACQUIRED WHEN D&RGW TOOK OVER THE DENVER & SALT LAKE



CLASSIC TRAINS COLLECTION

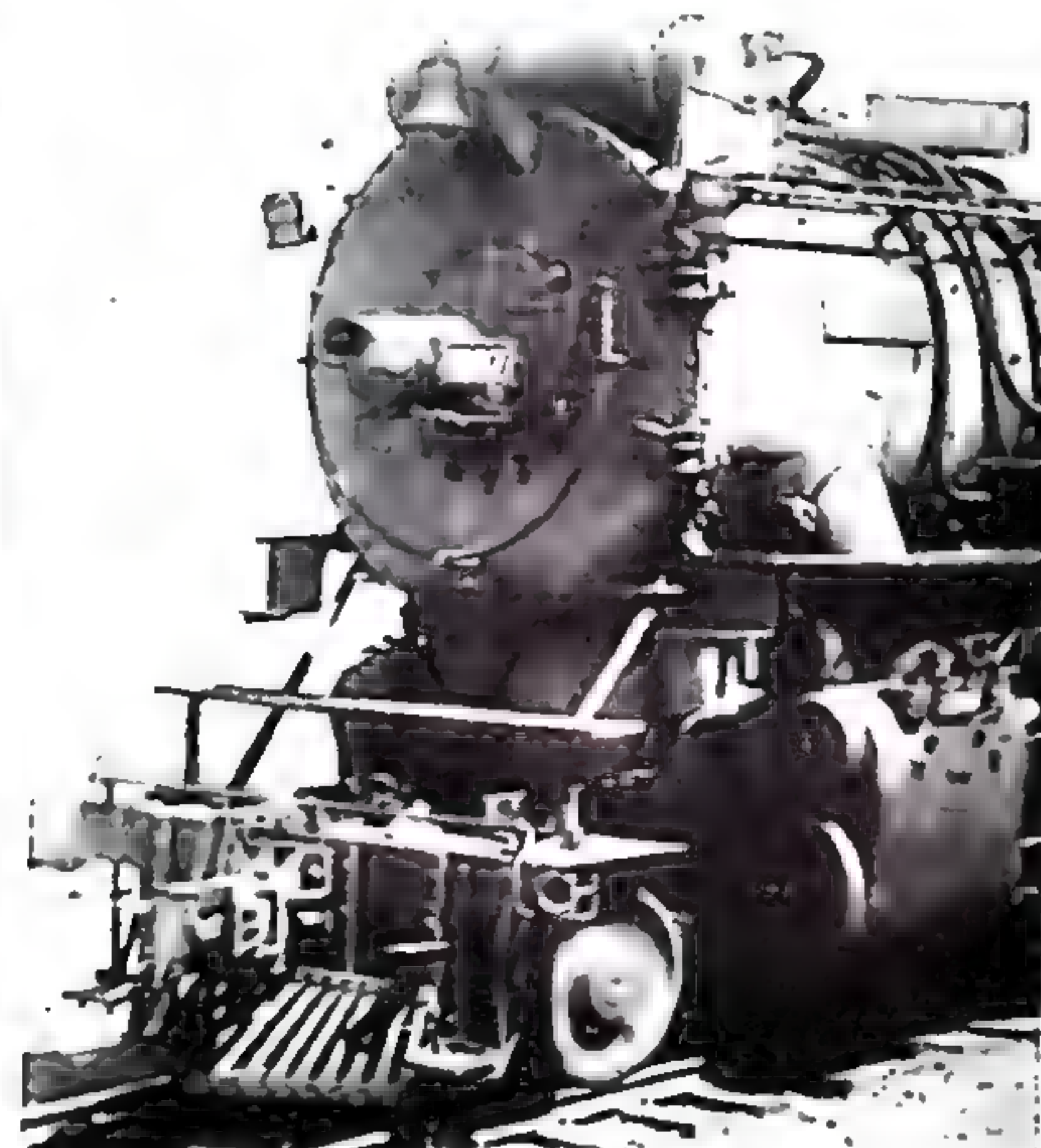
A detail view of the right side of an M-75 shows the double Walschaerts gear used to control the valve for the center cylinder. In a front-end view, the center cylinder is visible under the smokebox.

became standard on subsequent Rio Grande locomotive orders, even though the Worthington system was superior. This indicates an official may have had a financial interest in Elesco, and probably caused the delay in delivery of the last five locomotives.

3) Alco had acquired the manufacturing rights to the Gresley valve mechanism, and used it on its three-cylinder locomotives. For whatever reason, Bald-

win was unable to apply it to these 4-8-2's; consequently, it added a second Walschaerts assembly to the right side to move the valve for the center cylinder. It was an awkward arrangement, but it worked. (UP converted some of its 4-12-2's to the double-Walschaerts valve gear, but found no significant advantages in operation or maintenance.)

4) Lima Locomotive Works had developed a successful four-wheel trailing truck, and installed it on Texas & Pacific 2-10-4 locomotives in 1925. Perhaps it was not used on the D&RGW engines because many railroads would not purchase a device if its patent were issued



HAROLD K. VOLLRATH COLLECTION

to an individual employee. Possibly, the D&RGW felt that the four-wheel trailing truck had not been in service long enough to establish its reliability in daily operation.

When No. 1600 was delivered, it was set up at Burnham Shops in Denver, posed for its official portrait, then taken on a test run to Sedalia, some 20 miles south. The first five engines were assigned to the *Scenic Limited*, whose consist ranged from 12 to 18 heavy-weight cars. According to a Baldwin representative, the performance of these new locomotives—starting, accelerating, and uphill running—was "phenome-



OTTO C. PERRY COLLECTION, DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

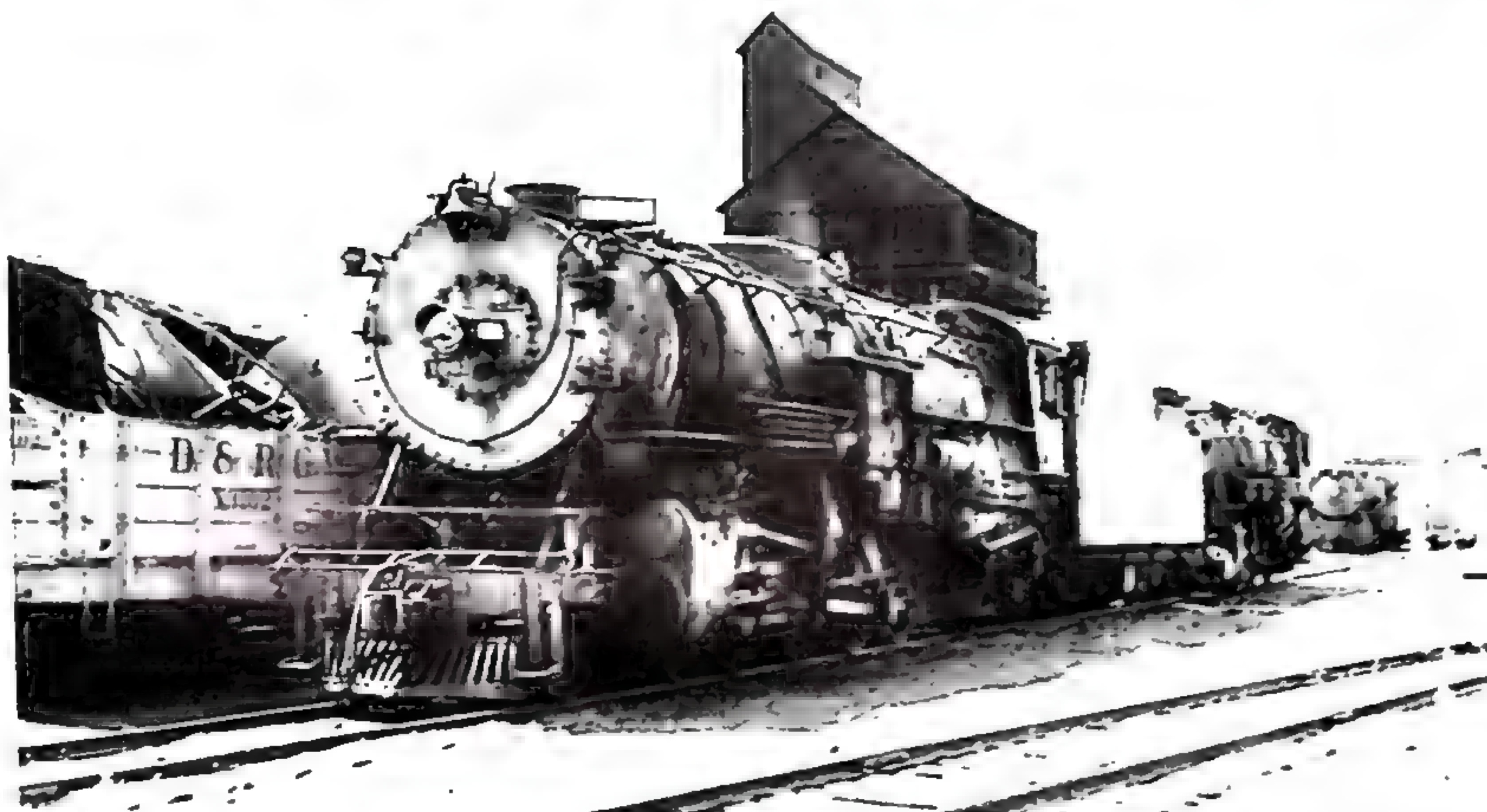
nal." The heaviest westbound consists added a 2-8-0 head-end helper at Salida, Colo., for the 1.4-percent approach to Tennessee Pass, and at Helper, Utah, for the 2.4-percent climb to Soldier Summit. Eastward trains added a 2-8-0 at Thistle, Utah, for the 2-percent western slope of Soldier Summit, and at Minturn, Colo., where a 2-8-8-2 was needed for the 3-percent helper grade on the west side of Tennessee Pass.

Excepting the *Scenic Limited*, the 1600's did not have permanent assignments. They worked where their superior characteristics could best be employed, usually between Denver and Pueblo, Salida and Glenwood Springs, and Helper and Thistle.

After more than two years' experience with the unwieldy 1600's (during which they created noticeable damage to the road's track), the Rio Grande concluded that the engines' relatively low drivers and high axle loadings made them better suited for freight duties.

But the road already had a substantial stable of heavy freight power. In 1927 it had purchased 10 gigantic single-expansion 2-8-8-2's, one of which could haul as much as a pair of 4-8-2's between Salida and Glenwood Springs. Over Soldier Summit between Helper and Provo, 2-8-8-2 Mallets and 2-10-2's reigned supreme.

The 1600's might have been out of work, but the railroad's management



ROSS B. GRENARD, JR.

transferred them to the lonely track across the desert between Grand Junction and Helper. This 177-mile district consisted of a series of lengthy grades of 1 to 1.2 percent, ideal territory for heavy 4-8-2's. Freights there "belonged" to the 1500's and 1600's until 1938, when new 4-6-6-4's began running through between Grand Junction and Salt Lake City. At the end of 1941, engine 1601 was declared irreparable. The remaining nine M-75's would have been retired also were it not for the traffic surge brought on by World War II.

The 1600's carried on for a few years after the war, operating out of Grand

Brand-new 1602 (top) strides past Louviers, Colo., with a seemingly endless *Scenic Limited* on August 15, 1926. By July 26, 1949, time had run out for the big engine as she awaited scrapping at Pueblo.

Junction as far east as Minturn and as far west as Helper. Diesels were replacing the 4-6-6-4's, which in turn superseded the three-cylinder 4-8-2's on the main line across eastern Utah. Three of the 1600's were scrapped in 1948, and the remaining six succumbed the following year, leaving behind a mixed record for what were once claimed to be "the most powerful passenger locomotives in the world." ■

Sampling California's streamliners

WP's brand-new *California Zephyr* helped erase memories of a bad ride in an SP coach

By James E. Valle • Painting by Mike Danneman

AS A YOUNGSTER GROWING UP in the San Francisco Bay Area in the late 1940's and '50's, I partook of the last great days of passenger-train travel, the era of the postwar streamliners. My hometown of Oakland and environs comprised the western terminus of three transcontinental lines: Santa Fe and Western Pacific, whose *San Francisco Chief* and *California Zephyr*, respectively, came in from Chicago, and Southern Pacific, which fielded several name trains on three routes. To my mother, who was born near the turn of the century and never learned to drive a car, going to visit friends and relatives by train





Powered by an A-B-A set of Alcos in *Daylight* red and orange, SP's *City of San Francisco* crosses the huge Suisun Bay bridge in September 1950. For author Valle, looking down from it was "scary."

was the normal thing to do. Most of her family was in Loyalton, Calif., a small town in Sierra Valley accessible from either Reno, Nev., via SP or Portola, Calif., via WP.

Our early trips over Donner Summit are only vague memories for me, except one, a journey on the *City of San Francisco*, which is fairly clear. I remember arriving at Oakland's 16th Street Station just in time to see a train pulling out. I was sure we had missed it, but Mom consulted her ticket and firmly asserted that we were in plenty of time. Sure enough, 10 minutes after that first train departed, an all-yellow streamliner pulled into the station behind a set of gleaming Alco PAs.

The *City's* departure was late in the

afternoon, but I stayed glued to the window for a twilight run around the south shore of San Pablo Bay and Carquinez Strait. After Port Costa, the train began to slow down and gain height, and presently we were crossing the massive vertical lift bridge at Martinez. That was scary—you looked straight down to the water a hundred feet below. To make our crossing more dramatic, one of SP's massive cab-forward steam locomotives shot past on the westbound main, causing the whole structure to rumble hollowly. Beyond Suisun Bay were the Yolo Bypass causeway near Sacramento, SP's shop complex in the state capital, and finally, as daylight was failing, SP's enormous Roseville Yard.

At Roseville, the *City* gained a helper, probably a 4300-class Mountain type because I distinctly remember seeing the characteristic skyline casing which made all SP's engines so equipped look massive and determined. As we climbed

the foothills, I delighted in watching the steam locomotive's headlight play along the tracks ahead and in noticing the occasional glare of her oil fire. Freights going the other way squealed past in a haze of hot brakeshoe smoke, the smell of which never penetrated the *City's* conditioned air.

All at once, the pleasure of the ride deteriorated significantly. We had entered into the first of the long snowsheds, which seemingly would cover the tracks all the way to Truckee. It was frustrating to a young, rubbernecking passenger to go through miles of snowsheds when some of the West's most spectacular mountain scenery was right outside the wooden walls.

The only bright spot was at Norden, where the sheds expanded in width to accommodate an entire operating community with passing tracks, servicing facilities, and a monster turntable, all under a timber roof. The *City* flashed



JOHN C. ILLMAN

through this wonderland without stopping, but I did see a cab-forward all floodlit as it rode the turntable after helping a freight up the hill. Beyond Norden, a brief break in the snowshed wall revealed a momentary view of Donner Lake hundreds of feet below, with lights from summer cabins and cottages illuminating its shoreline. Then darkness was the rule until we pulled into Reno, just before midnight. The next day we made our connection with the Loyalton and Susanville stage.

Our return trip was quite different, a nightmare of heat and stuffiness in a junker day coach attached to a nameless Southern Pacific accommodation train. It did, however, provide a daylight view of the Sierra foothills and many freights slogging uphill at a walking pace with cab-forwards fore and aft and mid-train as well. After that ride, Mom swore she would never take the train again.



FRED H. MATTHEWS JR.

THANKFULLY THAT VOW didn't hold up, but it did motivate us to try something different, a trip in 1955 to Portola, Calif., via Western Pacific on the *California Zephyr*. The CZ was a truly elegant train. Its route through Niles Canyon, Stockton, and the Feather River Canyon was longer than Southern Pacific's main line, but the *Zephyr* had brand-new, stainless-steel cars, including five with Vista Domes, and reliable air-conditioning. The train was reputed to be the last word in modernity. Best of all for me, there were no snowsheds on its route.

Surprisingly, our trip did not get off to a good start. We were obliged to wait for almost two hours at WP's Oakland station at Third and Washington Streets because of mechanical problems with the train's F-unit diesels. When the train finally arrived, resplendent in silver and orange with WP's distinctive Feather River logo, it was a band of disgruntled travelers who swarmed on board, not the least of whom was my mother.

The ride was a revelation, however. The train headed south until it plunged into narrow Niles Canyon, emerging in the Livermore valley and topping the Coast Range on Altamont Pass. All along this route, WP paralleled a Southern Pacific freight line that ran from the Central Valley to San Francisco via the Dumbarton Bridge.

Riding in the sleek *Zephyr* on the dieselized and CTC-equipped Western Pacific, I was struck by SP's comparatively archaic character. The numerous SP freights we saw were pulled by grime-streaked Consolidations and Mikados. A work train powered by an ancient Mogul looked like an assemblage of junk on wheels. Dirty yellow depots with train-order signals indicat-

This is Oakland Pier at 5 p.m., February 3, 1952. The *California Zephyr* (right) arrived 45 minutes ago; the *City of San Francisco* (center) is due out at 5:27, and SP's *Cascade* (left) will go at 5:32.

ed that this SP line still had timetable and train-order operation. By contrast, WP seemed clean, neat, and modern. Glued to my seat in a dome, I watched excitedly as we passed freights pulled by brand-new Geeps or older F units tucked into passing sidings for the passage of the *Zephyr*. Searchlight signals governed train movements, the track switches tended by a distant dispatcher. I watched the signals flash from green to red as we sailed past.

Because this was a long trip, Mom and I were obliged to do something we hadn't done before—eat in the dining car. I remember the fresh linen and flowers, the courteous waiters, and an ambiance that warned a 12-year-old to be on his best behavior. The meal was delicious; Mom had broiled halibut, and I stuck with my favorite, pork chops. Afterward, the waiter put down tiny salivars of water with a lemon peel floating in each one. This gesture pushed me past my current level of sophistication. I had no idea what to do with them, and eventually, after much puzzlement, asked the waiter what they were.

"Fingerbowls" was the mysterious reply, leaving me none the wiser. Naturally, I got a quick lesson in the etiquette of fingerbowls, which I still remember but never had another opportunity to apply. The *Zephyr's* diner certainly was a class act.

Although I found the chance to monitor CTC train operation from a Vista Dome fascinating as we crossed the flat Central Valley, the scenic highlight of the *Zephyr's* journey in California was



JERRY ARENDS



NORMAN HOLMES

Sharing WP's Loyalton Branch was the Clover Valley Lumber Co., whose 2-6-6-2T No. 4 pulls a log train past the WP local's caboose (top). When the author took the local out to Portola, he rode in an orange-and-silver caboose like 722, sporting fresh paint (above) at Doyle, 40 miles east of Portola, in October 1951 with Baldwin switcher 581.

supposed to be the Feather River Canyon. With the train running late, there was some speculation that we would not reach it before daylight faded. A little extra hustle apparently applied between Sacramento and Oroville, however, salvaged enough of the schedule to allow us to view the canyon, the high bridge at Keddie, and Williams Loop in the deep shadows of late afternoon. We arrived at Portola in almost full darkness, and as we detrained I was assured by one of the crew that the *Zephyr* would make up the rest of its lost time crossing the Nevada desert and be on time when it reached Salt Lake City.

OUR STAY IN NEARBY LOYALTON was not devoid of railroad interest. The town is in the southeast corner of Sierra Valley, at that time at the end of a 12-mile branch line WP shared with the Clover Valley Lumber Company. Every workday, an empty train of log jimmys set off for the woods, the locomotive's melodious whistle doubling as the town's wake-up signal. Along about mid-afternoon that same whistle would come floating on the wind from north of town. I learned that when it sounded, there was just time for me to hop on my borrowed bike and peddle furiously across town to trackside. My reward was the sight of a thrashing Shay or a diminutive 2-6-6-2T boiling into town with a long string of log cars rocking in its wake.

Three times a week, a Western Pacific diesel switcher arrived in Loyalton with a string of empty boxcars which it would exchange for loads at the sawmill

and its attendant box factory, and thereby hangs a tale. This branchline train was carded as a mixed, and although no coach was carried, passengers were accommodated in the caboose. Since Mom and I were ticketed for our return to Oakland on the westbound *Zephyr*, we could—upon making the proper arrangement—ride the caboose to Portola the evening before our *Zephyr* was due. A caboose ride! I'd never had one before and eagerly looked forward to it for the rest of our visit.

When the day arrived, we reported to the small WP station near the sawmill yard and waited impatiently. It was evening before the local's switching chores were done and the train started north, with about 15 boxcars of lumber products and an old outside-braced, silver-and-orange caboose bringing up the rear. The conductor and two brakemen were friendly and readily assented to my riding up in the cupola. I enjoyed it more than the Vista Dome, even though the train meandered down the light rail of the branch at a leisurely 15 mph, all the timetable ever allowed on the Loyalton Branch.

By the time we arrived at Hawley and let ourselves onto the main line to head west to Portola, it was full darkness. Our pace picked up a bit, the old caboose rocking and nosing gently in response to the higher speed. Chancing to look back, I saw a headlight. Periodic glances back confirmed that it was catching up to us, and fast. By the time I summoned the temerity to mention it to one of the crew, it was almost close enough to start lighting up the interior of our hack. Casually the brakeman assured us that our pursuers would see us and drop back soon, but that didn't happen.

By now the whole rear end of our train was lit up by the brilliant oncoming headlight, which belonged to a fast westbound freight. This was getting serious. A brakeman went out onto the rear platform of our crummy and waved his lantern. The oncoming train's crew seemed blissfully unaware of our predicament, and the light grew brighter still. Finally, when it seemed like it was almost too late, the freight began to drop back, and we all started breathing again. By the time we arrived in Portola and were lined into the house track, the freight was out of sight behind us, but as we stood on the station platform saying good-bye to our crew, the freight came storming by on the main, its high cars rocking and squealing, and vanished into the night.

How could this happen on a CTC-

controlled railroad? I'll never know if it was a genuine foul-up or just a little bit of railroad horseplay on the part of an engine crew who had just completed a boring crossing of 100 miles of barren desert and was looking for some excitement to enliven a dull run. As a 12-year-old railfan, I came to the conclusion that even modern railroading was not entirely foolproof.

MY LAST STREAMLINER RIDE occurred a year later, on Southern Pacific's *San Joaquin Daylight*, which carried my mother and me from Oakland to Modesto to visit old family friends. In summer 1956 the *Daylight* was the premier passenger train between Oakland and Los Angeles. It was made up of SP's classic red-and-orange streamlined cars, sometimes even sporting one of SP's homemade full-length dome lounge cars. Motive power was normally one of the earlier classes of GS 4-8-4's stripped of its decorative skirting and painted black.

Since this was a Valley train, I had hoped it would depart Oakland going south and go via Niles Canyon and Altamont Pass. To my consternation and puzzlement, though, as we left 16th Street, the train headed north on the familiar double-track main line through Berkeley and along San Pablo Bay. I didn't know what to make of this, but the mystery cleared up when we got to

Martinez. Instead of climbing the grade to the high lift bridge, we continued along the southern shore of Suisun Bay before swinging south toward Tracy. This was the Mococo Line, a connector and feeder that carried a large volume of agricultural traffic from the orchards and vineyards of central California to Tracy for eventual forwarding to San Jose, San Francisco, and the various Valley lines.

It was mid-August, so the Mococo Line's single track was saturated with seasonal traffic. Every passing siding held a grimy Harriman 2-8-0 and a long string of yellow or orange refrigerator cars, with a red caboose on the rear. As the *San Joaquin Daylight* swept grandly by them, the freight crews would come to the gangway or caboose platform to look us over and throw an "all's well" highball wave to us. Seated in the dome, I was at eye level with the men in the cabs of these workhorse engines. The effect was a curious mixture of fleeting impressions and a strange sensation of intimacy with the railroaders.

No matter how busy the line was, the *Daylight's* pace never slackened—the searchlight signals were always green for us. The line cut through the fruit orchards as though it was parting the seas. Byron and Brentwood flashed by, and the Diablo Hills formed a rampart to the west. The only distraction from pure, unadulterated railroading was a

vendor on board, offering dried candied peaches and apricots. I was tempted by them, but Mother balked at the price.

The *Daylight* left the Mococo Line at Tracy and entered a section of double track leading to Lathrop and a connection with SP's East Valley Main. It was here that the great GS-class locomotive really began to stretch her legs in earnest. Sixty mph became 70, and 70 became 80. We were walking right past cars and trucks on adjacent Highway 99. Northbound freights waiting in the hole for us were just a blur. We thundered over grade crossings at Manteca, Ripon, and Salida, towns too small to contribute any riders or significantly impede our progress. All too soon, we arrived in Modesto.

That was the end of a glorious ride, my last before the end of the streamliner era. Only a month later, in September 1956, the GS Northerns were replaced by diesels on the *San Joaquin Daylight*. By the end of 1957, almost all steam had been phased out on SP's Western Division. California railroading had passed its peak of drama and excitement, and would never again be as satisfying to me. ■

Looking every bit like the southbound train the author would ride four years later, Southern Pacific's northbound *San Joaquin Daylight* leaves Bakersfield, Calif., on August 16, 1952, behind GS-2 class 4-8-4 No. 4412 in its spartan black dress.



PHOTO BY S. J. NOBLE



Great Photographers

Bob Lewis: he saw it all



For an enterprising railroad editor and photographer, the trick was to be at the right place at the right time

By John Gruber • Photos by Robert G. Lewis

ROBERT G. LEWIS never describes himself as an expert photographer. "I happened to be at the right place at the right time with the right light and sometimes the right luck," he says modestly.

But Bob Lewis' historic steam and trolley pictures from the 1930's are remarkable, just the same. Armed with a used

camera and a railroad pass, Lewis had an uncanny ability to find interesting locations all across the country at a time when only a few enthusiasts were trackside taking photographs.

With 49 years at *Railway Age* and its parent, Sim-

With just a smudge visible at its flanged smokestack, Monon 46-2 444 leads train 6 along Fifth Street in Lafayette, Ind., on October 3, 1943.





The calm of November 6, 1936, at Clearfield, Pa., is broken by the arrival of Pennsy's daily Grampian-Altoona mixed train behind an H9s 2-8-0. Although there is no freight today, note the milk car on the rear.

mons-Boardman, as an editor and publisher, Lewis had an insider's view of the industry and access to top management. But his most memorable pictures come from the time when he was a messenger for the Pennsylvania Railroad in Philadelphia.

Lewis worked for the Pennsy three times, plus the Bessemer & Lake Erie, and served in the U.S. Navy before going to *Railway Age* in 1947 in Chicago as an associate editor, then transportation editor. In 1950 he moved to the magazine's circulation department in New York, and in 1956 he joined Simmons-Boardman as *Age's* publisher. He also served as president and vice chairman of the board with responsibility for all the firm's railroad magazines. In 1989 he received the Association of Railroad Advertising and Marketing Executives' distinguished service award.

Since retiring in late 1995, Lewis has kept an office in the home he and his wife, Vi, purchased at Ormond-by-the-Sea, Fla. He is listed on the *Railway Age* masthead as director of special projects. As a part of his "retirement" job, Lewis participated in the planning and publication of the *Car and Locomotive Cyclopedia* in 1997. His consulting work includes a company that makes gates, gate lights, and snow blowers ("business down here is really poor for snow blowers"); recruiting members for the Railway Progress Institute; finding heavy-duty flatcars for a client; and other special jobs such as traveling to Cuba to evaluate equipment.

One thing that hasn't changed at age 84: his ability to stand on his head at the drop of a hat. "I can't remember when I started it, but the most recent time is

probably last night. If I stop, I wouldn't be able to start again," Lewis says. He has stood on his head on the supersonic Concorde at Mach 1, on the French high-speed TGV at 186 mph in France, and on a Northeast Corridor DOT test train at 158 mph in 1968.

A ride on the Reading

Lewis took his first picture with a box Brownie camera at the Mount Airy (Pa.) station on the Reading's Chestnut Hill branch in about 1929. "This was a train I took to Roosevelt Junior High School in Germantown when it rained. It cost a nickel, half fare, for a 2½-mile ride. I rode to Washington Lane station, the third stop down the line. The engine was a 4-6-0 Camelback, as most of the Chestnut Hill locomotives were."

Soon Lewis bought a secondhand camera. "I got a 127 because it used the cheapest film available in those days. Every nickel counted," he recalls. "What I didn't know was that I got a camera with a Zeiss lens, which accounts for some of the good pictures. It also accounts for some of the poor pictures because when you have a good camera like that, you have too many things to think about. You have to worry about the aperture and the time and the focus."

"In those days, you didn't talk about film speed; you went to the drugstore and said, 'I want a roll of film,' and what you got was probably ASA 25 or something thereabouts. So I was lucky to have a good lens, because maybe every third one of my pictures turned out pretty well."

From a friend and trolley fan, William H. Watts III, Lewis learned that if you want good railroad pictures, you don't walk up and get a close-up, three-quarter-angle picture of the engine. "Get the location. Get the scene. Get something about the railroad itself: Stations,



Catenary and steam mix in Reading Company suburban territory as a 4-6-2 departs Jenkintown, Pa. (top), with an hourly Philadelphia-Jersey City train in August 1946. Diverging at right is the line to Bethlehem.

Three B&OCT trainmen enjoy the view in 1948 (above) as their 4-wheel "bobber" caboose rattles south over Chicago's Ash Street crossing of Santa Fe, Illinois Central, PRR, and NYC's Chicago River & Indiana.

Bob Lewis

Bob Lewis

A woman claims a parcel (right) and the locomotive fireman enjoys his coffee as a westbound Huntingdon & Broad Top Mountain train stops at Everett, Pa., February 7, 1953. Baldwin built the 2-8-0 in 1926.

Roadsters share a right of way with Philadelphia Rapid Transit tracks and a southbound Peter Witt car (below) along Old York Road in Elkins Park, Pa., in 1938. Note the northbound streetcar in the distance.



atmosphere, the terrain and the topography, the track," Lewis says. Other contemporaries included Bob Richardson, who would become a founder of the Colorado Railroad Museum; Dave Cope, now 86, with whom Lewis took ad hoc photo trips; and Lewis' brother, Hansell Lewis, 87, who shared an interest in railroad photography. Their most recent trip together was to the Cass Scenic Railway and other West Virginia operations in October 2000.

Lewis wishes he could have taken photo classes when he got started, but he could not afford them. When he started with the Pennsy on August 7, 1934, his salary was \$55 a month. Modest pay, to be sure, but at least he could ride to work on his pass and travel on weekends.

"I went to work on the railroad when I was 17. It was the Depression; the hours were long. I didn't get much time to go to school. When we quit work at 1 o'clock on Saturday, I took advantage of my pass and I went places. Thanks to the passes, I have a lot of pictures that many people were never able to get."

Life as an excursion entrepreneur

Lewis played a big part in starting a series of excursions called Off the Beaten Track—much to the objection of Pennsylvania Railroad people. "I was a messenger, and I had only been with the railroad a year when I thought up the then novel idea of a train ride just for the ride," says Lewis. "I offered the idea to the Traffic Department, and they were very cold about it. But I had a friend in the Operating Department; he was the chief of passenger transportation. Unlike the Traffic Department, he thought it was worth trying. 'If it doesn't work, what have we lost? We have idle crews.'"

But Lewis' request for a dining car shocked the Traf-

fic Department. "The Operating Department overruled them again," recalls Lewis. "They said, 'We have dining crews sitting around without work, and we have diners not being used—put a diner on it.'"

So the first Off the Beaten Track excursion ran on July 12, 1936. It was not particularly well patronized, but it more than covered the costs. And the dining car was a sellout. "The train ran over branch lines to Chestnut Hill, White Marsh, the Trenton cutoff, and the Atglen & Susquehanna branch to Enola Yard, and back through Harrisburg and over the New Holland branch," says Lewis. "It got so much favorable press that a second one, August 23, was a sellout. Then the PRR ran them continuously until the war."

Some ran in two sections, like a famous circle trip from Philadelphia, over the Poughkeepsie Bridge via the New Haven, all the way to Danbury, Conn., and back through New York. It was sold out, so the sponsors did it again. This time the sponsors ran two trains: one going north on one route, with the other going north on the other route so the trains passed near the mid-point, greatly improving motive-power utilization. Instead of deadheading back to Philadelphia from Maybrook, N.Y., one of the PRR engines waited and returned with the other section coming in the reverse direction. The trains carried nearly 2000 passengers.

Bob and Hansell Lewis were co-founders of the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, which sponsored the runs. In 1937 the Chapter convinced the Reading to begin running its famous Rail Rambles.

A Lewis favorite, Pennsy's Wilkes Barre-Philadelphia Anthracite Express roars up the 2½-percent grade at Barmouth, Pa., 7 miles from its Broad Street Station terminus, behind a G5s 4-6-0 on September 14, 1941.





Earlier trips in the mid-1930's, especially on the East Broad Top and Maryland & Pennsylvania, had been organized to appeal to railfans. But the Off the Beaten Track and the Rambles were aimed at the general public. "Part of their popularity was that in those days not too many people had automobiles," Lewis says. "If they did, they would go for a Sunday drive, but you couldn't go very far on a Sunday in an auto in those days. City people who didn't have cars loved the the trips."

Lewis was always interested in short lines and electric lines. He tried in 1940 to buy the Kishacoquillas Valley Railroad, which ran over the Pennsy 6 miles from Lewistown, Pa., on the Middle Division, to Reedsville, where it diverted for 9 miles. But Lewis couldn't raise the money.

"I wanted to be a shortline magnate. If I had been able to buy the Kishacoquillas Valley, which would have cost me \$29,000, I was going to try to incorporate the Huntingdon & Broad Top Mountain and the East Broad Top. I would have consolidated the three separate shops and got a mobile shop on a big truck, with which we could maintain our motive power and our cars from one single source. It wasn't in my heart, but I would have dieselized. I would have gotten a 44-tonner and kept the steam engines in reserve."

The Kishacoquillas Valley had two "beautiful" Pennsylvania D16-class 4-4-0's and a very modern little Ten-Wheeler built by Baldwin for them in 1929, Lewis recalls. Ultimately, a scrap dealer bought the railroad for \$26,000, then in 1940, turned around and sold a locomotive to the South Georgia Railroad for over \$20,000. "He got almost all his money back just on the sale of that one locomotive. It was a shame. That engine ran for many years on the South Georgia until they dieselized."

An eye for traction

Some of Bob Lewis' traction scenes are very much in demand because he has pictures of lines that other people rarely visited, such as the Tarentum, Brackenridge & Butler, which ran through World War II. "It was very short, went up a very steep grade, had no air brakes on its cars. It used track brakes as the West Penn did. The West Penn was my very favorite electric line, along with the Lehigh Valley Transit."

Based in Connellsville, Pa., West Penn went mostly south from Greensburg through the coal and coke region to Connellsville, Uniontown, and Brownsville; its track used the state's 5-foot, 2½-inch "trolley gauge."

Lewis remembers a funny exchange on the line: "I had gone out after work on Saturday, and got a late afternoon trolley at Greensburg. Some kid with a shirt with all the emblems sewn on already had the railfan's seat behind the motorman. At one point, the kid asked the motorman, a very senior guy, 'What's the gauge of the West Penn?' The old motorman said, 'What do you mean?' 'The gauge, the distance between the rails,' he replied. The motorman said, 'I don't know.' 'You mean you have been here some 30 years and you don't know the gauge?' the kid asked. 'All I can tell you, son, is they never gave me a car that wouldn't fit.'"

Lewis has ridden railroads in 54 countries, including a rarity he's proud to claim: the now-abandoned line in Surinam between French Guinea and British Guinea on the north coast of South America. In 1958, Lewis went to the Soviet Union for *Railway Age*, right after the launch of the satellite Sputnik in September 1957.

CNJ 2-6-2T 200 arrives at Newark in January 1938 with a commuter shuttle from Elizabethport. CNJ bought 25 of the Baldwin tank engines in 1903-04 for bidirectional service on short routes lacking turntables.

Well-maintained Central of New Jersey 4-6-2 833 (left) lays down sand as she digs in with westbound varnish at Elizabeth, N.J., in June 1936. A train of P70 coaches is at PRR's Elizabeth station, seen beyond 833.

In one of Lewis' favorite shots, a Reading special for President Franklin D. Roosevelt rolls into Gettysburg, Pa. (below), behind a polished 2-8-0 on July 4, 1938, the 75th anniversary of the Civil War battle there.

Bob Lewis





On the original Chicago & North Western route, Fond du Lac-Janesville (Wis.) local 28 has just left its Watertown depot in 1948 behind an R-1 4-6-0 that just nudges across Milwaukee Road's Chicago-Twin Cities main.

"I had trouble getting a visa to make this trip because I wanted to include the Trans-Siberian. They did let me go as far as Irkutsk, about halfway. When I came back I had wonderful pictures of the Russian railroads, some of them made under great threat. Twice they tried to take my camera away."

The slides Lewis brought back ended up reaching a wide audience. "I made a slide show of the trip first for the NRHS, then for a New York railroad club. The word got around, and over the next two years I made more than 90 shows in 30 states. At one time Pennsyl-

vania Railroad President James Symes had his chief clerk call and ask if I would do my slide show after their Monday morning staff meeting. I was introduced to Mr. Symes, whom I knew but he didn't know me. Somebody told him I had worked for the Pennsylvania in 1934. He said, 'Oh, I remember you, you were the only white messenger in Broad Street Station.' A funny way to be remembered."

Steam was the big attraction

Favorite photos crowd the walls of Lewis' home office in Ormond Beach, along with mementos of his New York years. There are photos taken in February 1940 of the Pennsy and Reading at the diamond at Dillersville, west of Lancaster, Pa., not long after the



Bob Lewis

A GP9, a combine, a through Pullman sleeper from New York, a box-car, and a hopper car comprise Chesapeake & Ohio's Hot Springs (Va.) mixed train (below), photographed near Covington in June 1954.

On an April day in 1948 (bottom), a Green Bay & Western Alco FA tugs at a long string of freight cars departing Ferry Yard in Kewaunee, Wis., where GB&W connected with Ann Arbor and C&O carferries.



Pennsy had electrified to Harrisburg. He treasures a photo of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's July 4, 1938, train on the Reading's Gettysburg branch, and the *Anthracite Express* on the 2 percent grade at Barmouth, Pa.

"The *Anthracite Express* was one of my favorite train rides. Nearly always it was a two- or three-car train with a G5 [4-6-0] on the head end. It was a long ride from Philadelphia to Wilkes-Barre, five hours, but it was every inch beautiful."

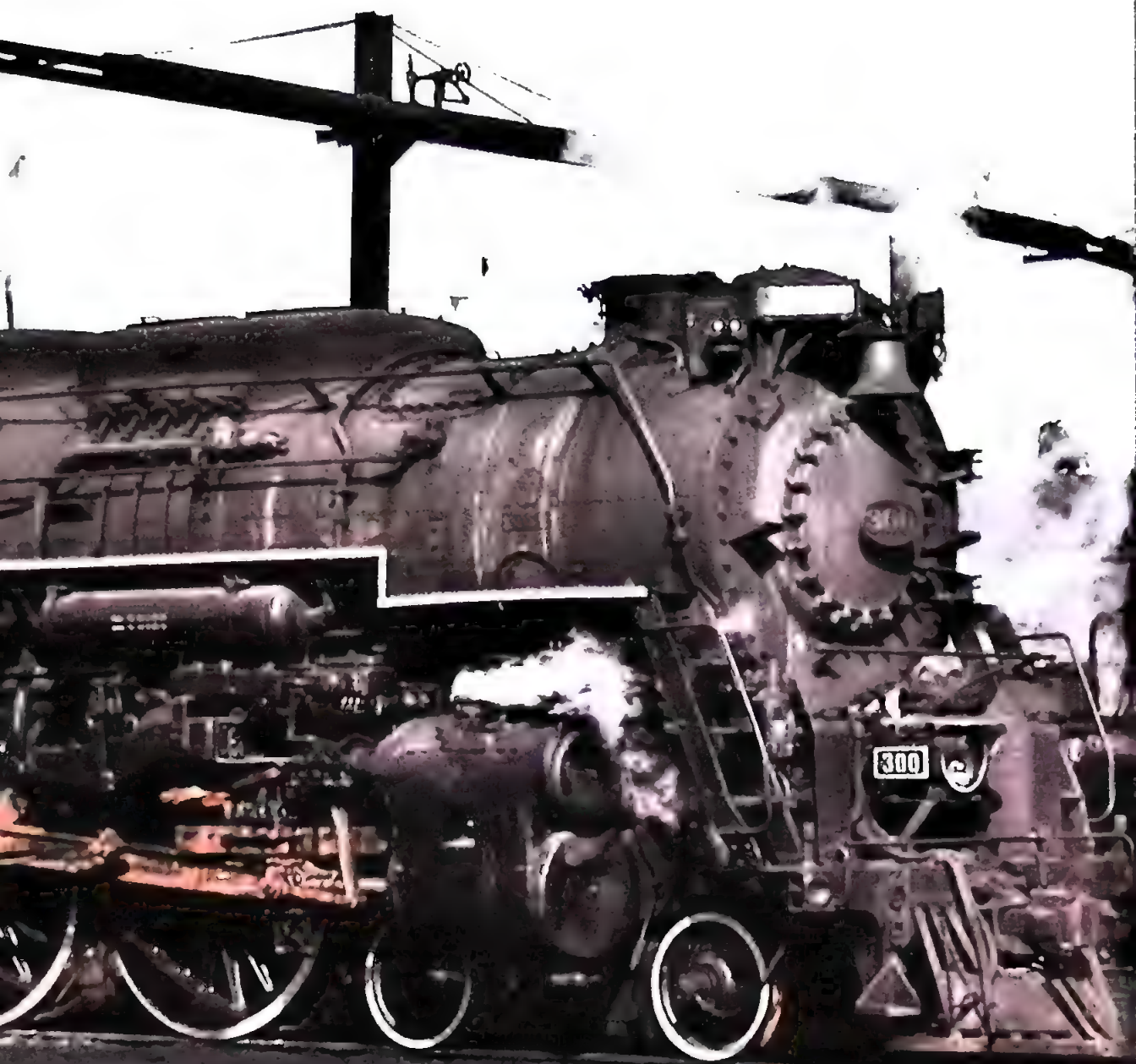
For the record, Lewis has 1096 black-and-white negatives of 128 railroads and 912 negatives of 132 electric lines, plus color slides starting in 1960. His small black notebook of railroad mileage he has ridden shows 148,692.6 non-duplicated miles in the U.S. and abroad.

"I sometimes weep at situations where I didn't have

a camera or for some reason did not have film," Lewis says. "I was very frugal with my film. Many of my 127 pictures to this day have never been printed, because I would get the negatives and pick only the best ones for printing because it cost money, like a nickel apiece."

Perhaps the 1930's was the most interesting era for Lewis. "Virtually everything was steam. If you liked short lines, they were beginning to fade out in the late 1930's. By end of the war, only the good ones were left.

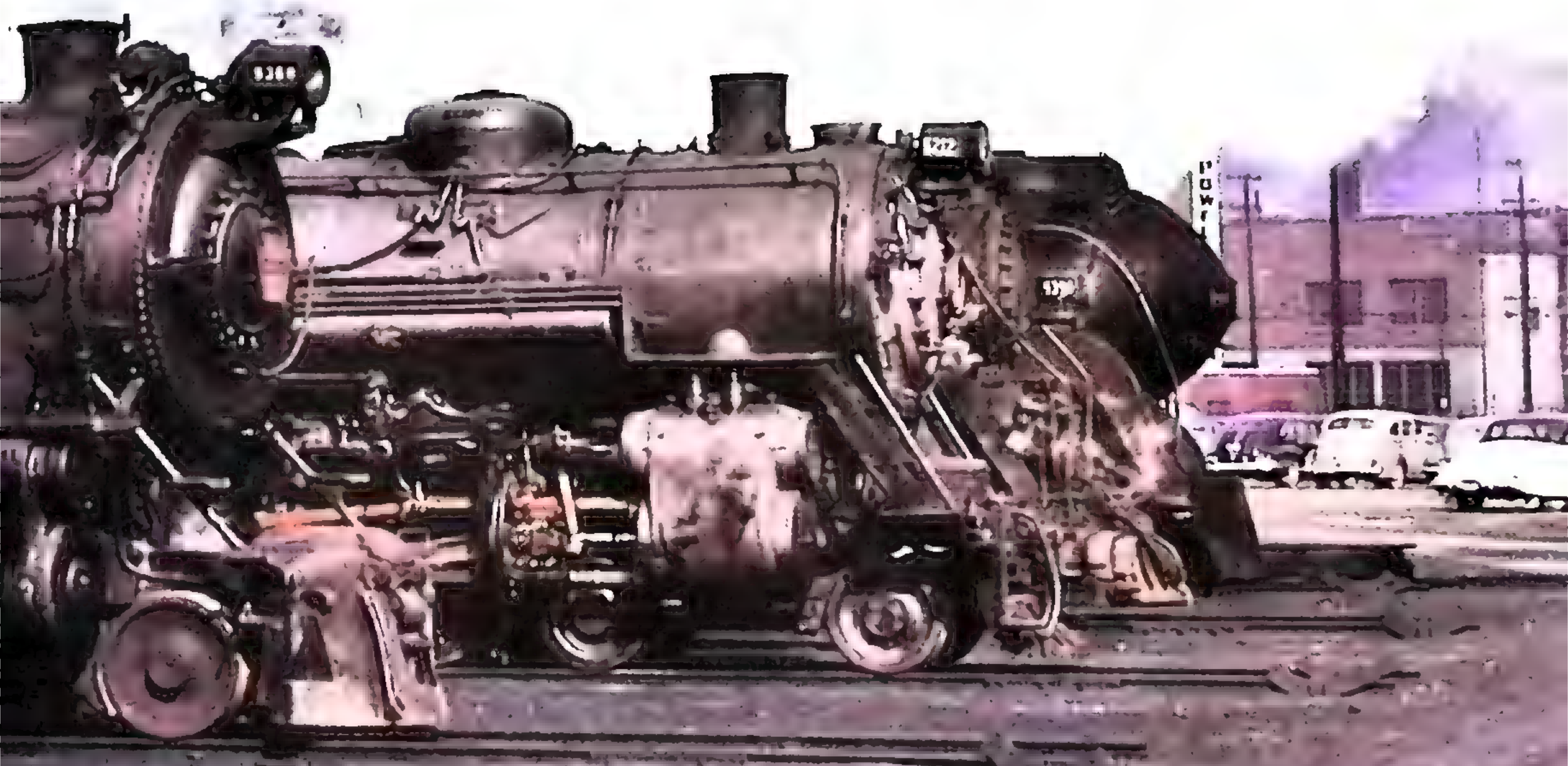
"Railfans are very lucky, because if you work for somebody and they send you away on business, you aren't bored. The railfan has something to do with any spare time. As a matter of fact, there's a great temptation to abandon your job and ride the local train. It's a hobby that's all encompassing." **I**



SAY YOU'RE A HEAD COACH in the Steam Passenger Locomotive League, Eastern Division, and it's time to pick an all-star team. What would your choices be?

You could do worse than the five engines photographer Robert Malinoski found at the Cincinnati Union Terminal enginehouse on February 10, 1953. From the left, here's the line-up: Chesapeake & Ohio L-2 4-6-4 300, rakish with low headlight and roller bearings; Pennsylvania K4s 4-6-2 368, a stalwart member of the largest family of Pacifics; Baltimore & Ohio 5 4-6-2 5212, smallest of the lot, but of good USRA stock; New York Cen-

Sam's dream team



tral J-1d 4-6-4 5395, from the road that gave the Hudson type its name; and Norfolk & Western K2a 4-8-2 135, deemed by its owner—who knows steam—good enough for streamlining in middle age.

Want to make some trades? The roads serving CUT can help. B&O could swap the P-5 for a "President" P-7 (streamlined or standard). Central might send down a J-3a Super Hudson. And, with all due respect to old 135, we'd prefer an N&W J. Because their CUT trains are dieselized, we're too late to tap Louisville & Nashville and Southern, which is a pity—a green-and-gold SP Pa 4 Pacific would make this team a looker.

London's pride and joy



GM's Geeps were the standard of Canadian railroading for decades

By Greg McDonnell

IN THE BLuish GREY OF TWILIGHT on a mid-1960's summer evening, BX Tower in downtown St. Thomas, Ontario, stands as a red-brick sentry beside New York Central's double-track Canada Southern main line linking Detroit and Buffalo. The low murmur of conversation on the dispatcher's phone drifts through the tower's open windows into the still evening air. In the distance, a car radio tuned to the local 1000-watt AM station CHLO ("Swingin' 68") blares out the Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night" as muscle cars cruise up and down Talbot Street.

A bell sounds in the tower, and BX comes to life as the operator methodically moves down the lever frame. *Ka-chunk, ka-chunk, ka-chunk-ka-chunk-ka-chunk*. In rapid-fire succession, the sound of the tower's manual "armstrong" levers locking into position echoes through the building. Outside, the connecting rods rattle and shud-

der. Semaphore blades guarding the London & Port Stanley connecting track drop to the horizontal "stop" position. Track crossover switches slap into alignment. Moments later, the raucous bells and dancing banjo signals of a dozen wigwags guarding grade crossings west of the tower herald the approach of an eastbound freight. The sounds of the muscle cars and CHLO's music are swallowed in the throaty, throbbing growl of EMD 567's as a quartet of Central Geeps—GP7's 5826 and 5824, plus GP9's 7437 and 7435 already renumbered for the upcoming Penn Central—grind into town. The bellowing exhaust and the staccato beat of steel wheels pounding the L&PS diamond reverberate between the backs of the downtown buildings and the houses lining Centre

Two Canadian GP7's, built for Chesapeake & Ohio and set up for short-hood-forward operation, bring a New York Central "tunnel job" from Detroit into Windsor, Ont., on August 11, 1962, in a photo by J. David Ingles.



falo, the 111-mile southern Ontario road owned jointly by NYC and Canadian Pacific. Half of a four-unit order, 71 and 72 were outshopped on August 25, 1950. TH&B received three more GP7's in June 1953, completing the dieselization of its freights in a purge whose victims included 2-8-4's 201 and 202, Canada's only Berkshire types.

Owing in part to GMD's late start, the GP7 was somewhat rare in Canada. Compounding this circumstance was that two of Canada's largest GP7 fleets toiled on remote lines. You had to go to Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., and environs to see Algoma Central's fleet, which was dominated by 21 GP7's delivered in 1951-52, but you could ride behind them, too, on ACR's Agawa Canyon tour train and its passenger local. All were painted in a handsome Lackawanna-inspired gray, maroon, and yellow. More remote, but not nearly as attractive, were QNS&L's 22 workaday-gray GP7's, built during 1951-53 coincident with the construction of the 356-mile line from the St. Lawrence River port of Sept Iles, Que., to iron mines deep in the Ungava tract along the Quebec-Labrador border.

At first, Canada's two transcontinen-

TH&B GP7 71 was London's first Geep, and Algoma Central GP9's 171 and 172 its last. TH&B's 400-series "torpedo Geeps," on train 371 on July 2, 1966, at Vinemount, were Canada's first GP9's.



GREG McDONNELL



JAMES A. BROWN



J. DAVID INGLES

tals embraced the Geep only tentatively, with small orders for GP7's—24 for CN and 17 for CP, all but a few equipped with non-standard, single-beam "garbage can" headlights. Although they were insignificant in number, they presaged massive GP9 purchases by both big roads within just a few years.

Catching on like wildfire

EMD's introduction of the 1750 h.p. GP9 in early 1954 came just as dieselization was gaining momentum in Canada, and the model caught on like wildfire. Although CN and CP each acquired hundreds of GP9's, little TH&B was again the first Canadian buyer. It took



JAMES A. BROWN

the fires on 501 and 502, TH&B's celebrated pair of ex-NYC Hudsons.

Following TH&B's lead, CP bought 29 GP9's in 1954-55 for passenger service to augment its cab units. Ontario Northland bolstered its fleet of dual-service FP7's with a half-dozen boiler-equipped green GP9's, and NYC included the aforementioned pair of torpedo Geeps among the dozen GP9's in 1957 that completed its Canada Southern dieselization. (Intended apparently as protection power, this pair may never have pulled an NYC passenger train, although one participated in a fan trip on TH&B in January 1967.)

Canada's only other native torpedo Geep spent much of its early life under cover. Midland Railway of Manitoba No. 2 was built in March 1957 as protection power for the Winnipeg passenger trains of the Midland's parent roads, Great Northern and Northern Pacific. As such, the solid-orange No. 2 spent most of its days slumbering in the Winnipeg enginehouse while Midland No. 1, a GMD SW900, tended to the local freight switching work. After the switcher was sold, No. 2 operated for many years on the Midland's daily freight, which used

CN 4330 leads another Geep and an MLW unit at Newtonville, Ont., on May 22, 1966. Many QNS&L GP9's wound up on Chicago & North Western. Two of ONR's six GP9's lead a freight in July 1974.



JOE BROCKMEYER; J. D. INGLES COLLECTION

three for passenger service, equipped with steam generators in their high short hoods and air reservoirs atop their long hoods. This appearance begat the universal nickname "torpedo Geep"; relocating the air tanks from below the frame to the roof allowed for a water tank and a larger fuel tank. Unlike TH&B's GP7's, though, the 9's, numbered 401-403, were set up for long-hood-forward operation, and when they hit the road in spring 1954, they quickly claimed some high-profile steam victims, just as the 7's had. Canada's first GP9's not only eliminated run-through New York Central steam power on Buffalo-Toronto passenger trains, but killed



BOB WILT; J. DAVID INGLES COLLECTION

CN trackage rights between Winnipeg and the GN and NP connections at Emerson, Manitoba. While almost all other Canadian torpedo Geeps have been retired, rebuilt, or sold, No. 2, now in BNSF orange-and-green as 1685, retains its original configuration and home-road assignment.

While CN's U.S. subsidiaries Grand Trunk Western, Central Vermont, and Grand Trunk (of New England) all received EMD torpedo Geeps for passenger work, CN itself, preferring cab units for important passenger assignments, got none. However, when the time came to dieselize secondary passenger trains, CN executed the *coup de grace* with 104 custom steam-generator cars, including 30 built by GMD. Essentially express cars with steam lines and two steam generators, these unique CN cars provided heat to the passenger cars while allowing CN to assign freight units to the trains. To complement the cars, CN equipped several groups of GP9's and RS18's with pass-through steam lines and high-speed gearing.

CN might have skipped the torpedo

Geep, but the government road put its own stamp on nearly 350 GP9's. Set up to run long hood forward, with high-mounted bells above their headlights and odd-looking, tubular spark arrestors mounted crossways atop their hoods, CN Geeps had a look of their own. If that wasn't enough, more than half (192, to be precise) were delivered with small fuel tanks and rode on Flexicoil trucks to allow them to follow in the footsteps of Consolidations and Pacifics on thousands of miles of light-rail branch lines.

Less distinctive, perhaps, but arguably more attractive in their handsome maroon and grey, CP's 200 GP9's were oriented to run short hood forward and originally assigned almost exclusively to western Canada. Until the late '80's, when they were rebuilt for systemwide use as yard engines and road-switchers, CP Geeps were uncommon east of

CP GP7 8412, at Revelstoke, B.C., in 1973, sports a "garbage can" headlight. Two GP9's lead the *Canadian* around Morant's Curve in 1978. Note the trucks and small fuel tanks on the GP9's, and the boiler car behind them, on the CN train in 1968.



JAMES A. BROWN



P. D. CUSTER JR.; J. DAVID INGLES COLLECTION

Thunder Bay, Ont. West of the Lakehead, though, they were king of the road until well into the SD40-2 era. Whether racing across the prairies with time freights, clawing their way over Rogers Pass with grain, stretching their legs at 65 mph pinch-hitting for F units on the *Canadian*, or probing the weeds of a lonely branch at 10 mph with 40-foot grain boxes, CP Geeps were the quintessence of prairie and mountain railroading alike.

The London plant may have gotten a late start, but it had the last word on first-generation Geeps. Long after La Grange built its last GP9, GMD turned out a few final examples of the top-sell-



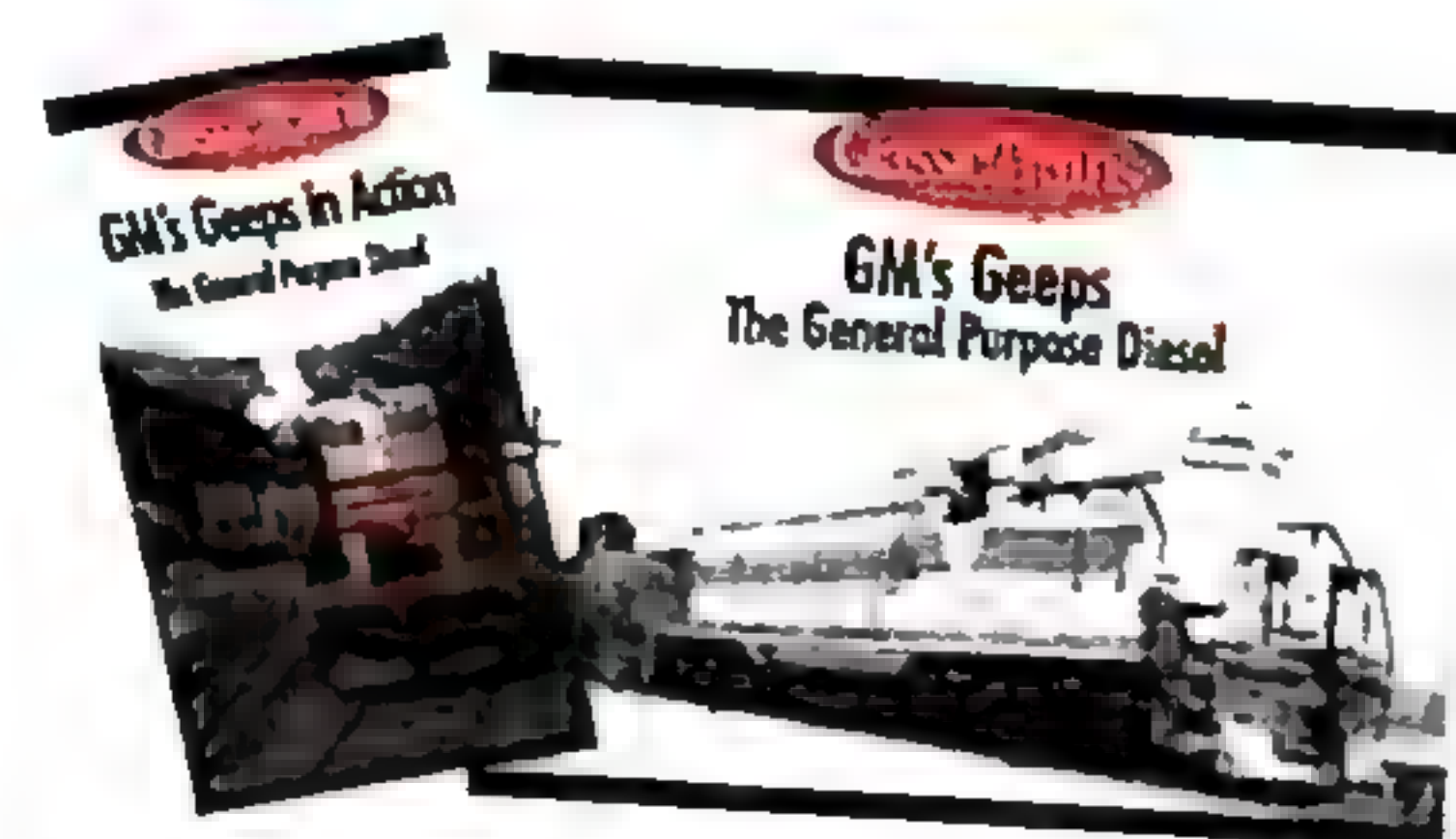
RAILWAY MEMORIES COLLECTION

ing first-generation hood unit. In spring 1960, as La Grange was building GP18's, GMD built 9 low-nose GP9's for Quebec Cartier Mining and 2 final, stock high-nose versions for neighbor QNS&L, giving QNS&L Canada's third-largest Geep fleet: 22 GP7's and 53 GP9's. Three years later, months after CP had acquired its two GP30's, Algoma Central caught the diesel-watching world off guard by taking two high-nose GMD GP9's. Delivered in August 1963, GP9's 171 and 172 closed the book on first-generation Geeps, almost 13 years to the day after TH&B 71 and 72 left London.

Of course, the book on Geep operation is far from closed. A half century

after GMD built its first GP7's, hundreds of London-built Geeps, many of them rebuilt, labor on. TH&B 71 was wrecked and burned in a fatal grade-crossing collision near Welland in February 1980, but sister 72 carries on. Rebuilt as chop-nosed CP 1682, she recently attended GMD's 50th anniversary event. And not far from her London birthplace, the former ACR 172 survives on Essex Terminal, a Windsor switching road. Also chop-nosed, and renumbered ETR 102, the last GP9 built anywhere keeps on doing just what her designer intended, working out of the limelight, "doing really useful work." Dick Dilworth would be pleased. ■

There's more on Electro-Motive's early GP-series locomotives in the CLASSIC TRAINS video, *GM's Geeps in Action*, and the CLASSIC TRAINS book, *GM's Geeps: The General Purpose Diesels*. Call (800) 533-6644, or visit www.classictrainsmag.com.



1961: New life for one friend, farewell to some others



JAY WILLIAMS

IN STEAM WE TRUST: With dieselization essentially an accomplished fact throughout the U.S. and Canada, a handful of big carriers still have steam engines on the books for occasional public excursions. Northern types keep the flame alive on UP, Reading, CN, and the Burlington, which also trots out chunky 2-8-2 4960 (above) from time to time. Indeed, CB&Q shows its commitment to steam's future by sending the Mikado to its Galesburg (Ill.) shops for overhaul in '61. Railfans gladly pay a \$1 surcharge on each ticket to help fund the work.



LEAF OUT, NOODLE IN: Canadian National, feeling its maple leaf herald and green-and-gold livery do not reflect the modern, multi-faceted entity it has become, goes for a whole new look. Traditionalists mourn the passing of the old image, but the new one is hailed in industrial design circles. Its designer, Allan R. Fleming, predicts it will last for 50 years.



SO LONG, SOUTH SHORE: Longtime affiliates Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie; Wisconsin Central; and Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic are merged January 1 into the new Soo Line Railroad Co. MSTP&SSteM and WC had been under the Soo banner for decades, but the "South Shore," with its modest steamers and yellow-and-green Baldwin road-switchers, had its own identity. While actual mergers are few this year, N&W+NKP+WAB, C&O+B&O, NYC+PRR, and SR+CofG are in the works.

DIESEL DEBUTS: EMD completes its first GP30 in July; popular with railroads and their fans, the humpbacked model would sell 948 units in just over 2 years. . . . Alco rolls out its less-successful RS32 (only 35 were sold). . . . German builder Krauss-Maffei sends six diesel-hydraulic freight units to the U.S., three each for SP and Rio Grande.



A. C. KALMBACH

By Robert S. McGonigal



PHILIP C. JOHNSON

OBLIVION FOR THE OLYMPIAN HI: Skytop obs cars and D.C. catenary part company as Milwaukee Road discontinues its Chicago-Seattle-Tacoma *Olympian Hiawatha*, the last eastbound version of which is seen here at Missoula, Mont., on May 23. A Minneapolis-Deer Lodge (Mont.) remnant survived for a time. . . . In the East, Lehigh Valley goes freight-only when its Toronto-New York *Maple Leaf* comes off February 4.



C. J. BURGER

PASSENGER PLUSES: Milwaukee Road commuters in Chicago enjoy 40 new push-pull bi-level cars—the road's first Budds—beginning June 19. Six E6's and E7's are rebuilt to E9's to help move the 9-to-5ers. . . . Rio Grande acquires seven World War I-era heavyweight coaches from Northern Pacific for ski-train and local-passenger duty.

LOOKING AHEAD—AND NOT SEEING MUCH: Lehigh & New England made its living hauling anthracite and cement, and some bridge traffic, between the Tamaqua and Bethlehem (Pa.) areas and Maybrook, N.Y. With business declining, the 177-mile road, though still solvent, calls it quits on October 31. Jersey Central picks up 40 or so miles in Pennsylvania. Looking prosperous enough, four FA1's lead a freight toward Maybrook at MQ Tower, just south of Campbell Hall, N.Y., 9 months before the end.

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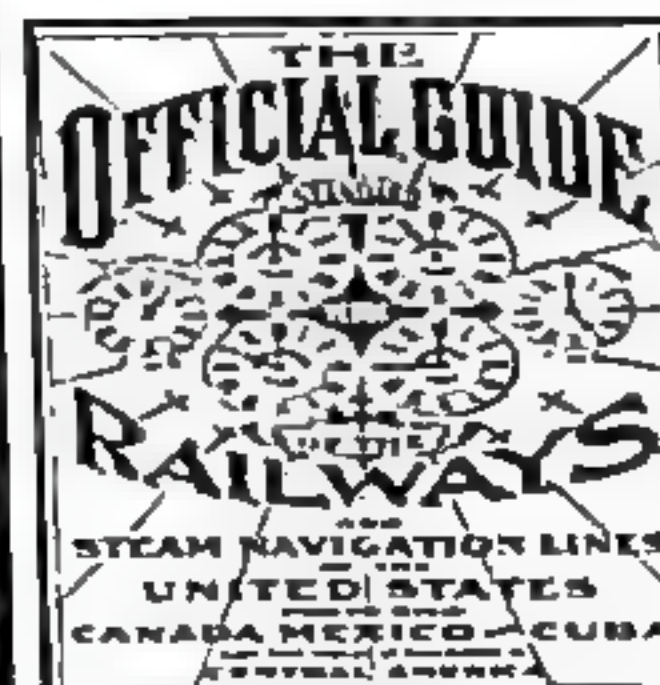
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Merger? What merger? Two tariffs equal one trip

AS RAILROAD MERGERS were sweeping the land through the 1960's, passenger services of individual carriers were on a one-way trip to oblivion, culminating in Amtrak's formation in 1971. For most roads, this couldn't happen soon enough, and this attitude, coupled with the regulatory obstacles of the day, resulted in two examples of "separate but equal" ticketing during my travels.

On September 2, 1965, 10 months after Norfolk & Western had acquired the Nickel Plate Road and the Wabash, I was in Chicago, ready to head home to Detroit. I'd ridden the obvious direct routes (New York Central, Grand Trunk Western) many times, even an indirect and exotic one (Monon and Wabash via Lafayette, Ind.). But I'd never done the Nickel Plate, and the last train on its Chicago-Buffalo route was up for discontinuance. So I stepped up to the La Salle Street Station ticket counter and asked about a ticket to Detroit, via Fort Wayne and the former Wabash. Sorry. Despite the merger, no new N&W or through tariffs had been filed. The clerk sold me passage to Fort Wayne, and the ticket stock, of course, faithfully read "NYC&StL" and "Nickel Plate Road."

So did all the rolling stock on train 6, the *City of Cleveland*, due out at 10:30 p.m. After noting our five-car consist behind GP9 482, I boarded to enjoy a snack and beverage in the lounge car (the train opened at 9:30), then found a seat in one of the two coaches. (The two NKP sleeper-lounges were operating on their "proper" namesakes that night—our car was *City of Cleveland*, and presumably the westbound *City of Chicago* had that named car in its consist.)

We were on time until somewhere in central Indiana, where the lack of motion awakened me. We sat, and sat. Finally, I heard a freight go by, and we resumed our trek. When we pulled into NKP's depot on the north side of downtown Fort Wayne, we were a bit behind our scheduled 2:41 a.m. arrival, enough so that my 39-minute (on paper) connection to train 2, the overnight *Detroit Limited* from St. Louis, across downtown on the south side, was in danger.

I hustled downstairs into the depot and called a taxi. "Be right over." Then I called the Wabash depot to see if the



TWO PHOTOS: J. DAVID INGLES

train, due out at 3:20, had arrived. Yep, said the agent, "She's a-sittin' here loadin' mail. She'll be here another 5 or 10 minutes." At least 5 of those minutes expired without my taxi showing up, so I switched to my Plan B. A crewman from 6 was still in the agent's office, so I knew it wasn't going to leave before I could run back upstairs and get back on. I paid a cash fare to Fostoria, Ohio.

This busy junction town made for an easy backup plan. Not only was Fostoria served by N&W trains 5 and 6 between Buffalo and Chicago and by four trains on B&O's Chicago-Pittsburgh main line, it also saw a section of Chesapeake & Ohio's *George Washington* between Virginia and Detroit. The northbound version, No. 47, was due into Fostoria at 9:20 a.m., 4½ hours after N&W No. 6.

No. 6 deposited me in Fostoria in the pre-dawn hours. There, the driver of the taxi that met the train was intrigued with my brief visit to his town. "Well, the C&O depot won't open till 8, so why don't you just ride around with me?" he said. "I have some regular folks I pick up and take to work every morning." No extra charge. After making his regular runs, we ate breakfast at a downtown cafe, after which he dropped me at the C&O depot. I explained the deal to the agent, left my suitcase in his care, and hiked south a few blocks to F tower, which guarded the B&O's diamonds with C&O and New York Central. There I could photograph whatever freights came by and keep tabs on 47 so I would

Looking not unlike the author's train out of Chicago in 1965, NKP No. 6 heads east from Cleveland on August 16, 1964 (above). PC train 312's crews posed for an obligatory last-run photo at Mattoon.

know when to get back to the depot.

The train came in behind E8 4026 with a seven-car consist, and, although I was on a different route from the one I'd planned, I was homeward-bound with an unusual experience to remember. Just in time, too—NKP 5 and 6 came off a week later!

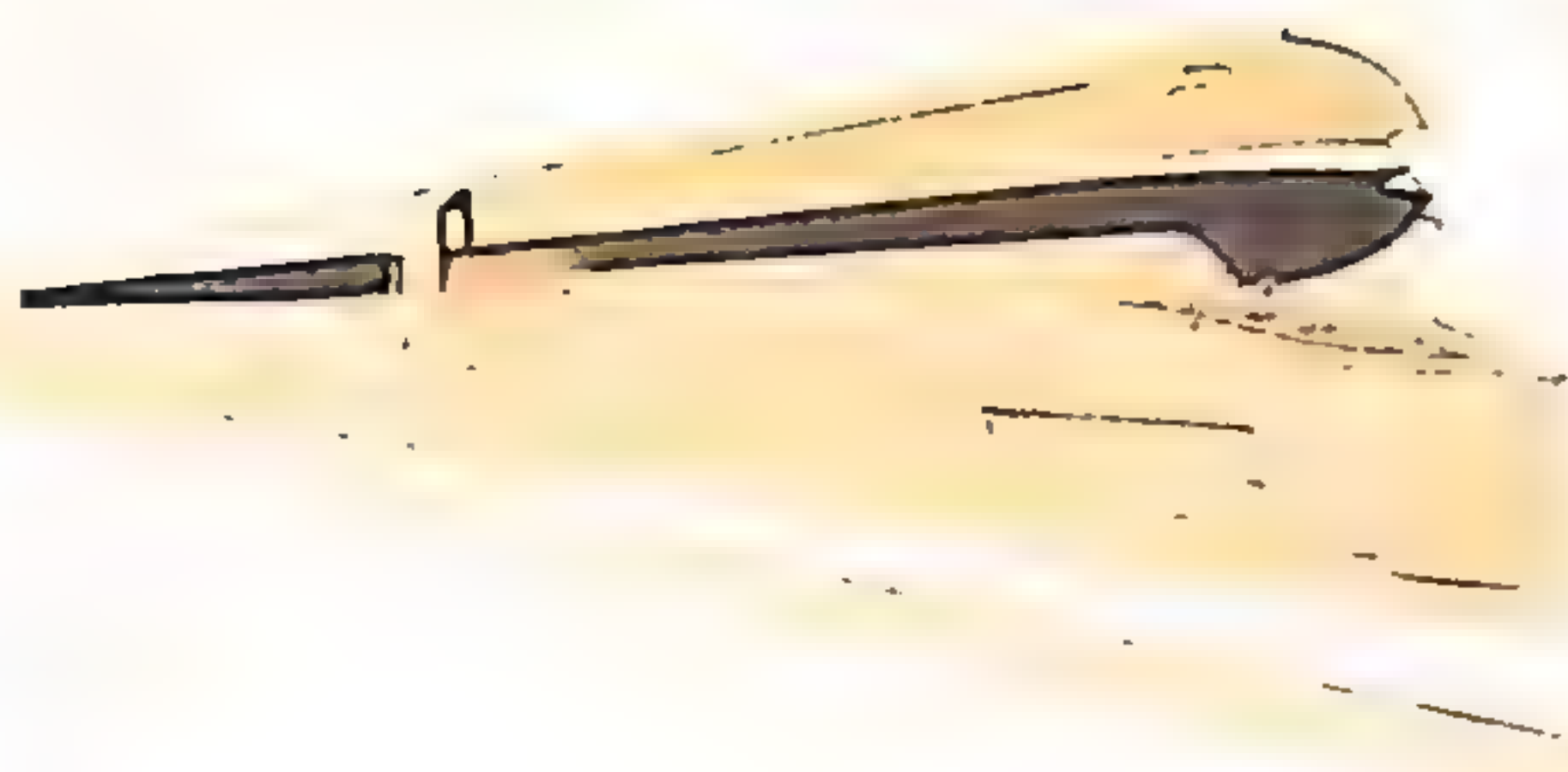
A surprise last run

Two-and-a-half years hence, on February 1, 1968, the Pennsylvania and the New York Central merged, and I was living in Springfield, Ill. Just six weeks after the Penn Central merger, I planned a short trip to Dayton, Ohio, to visit my friend, Lou Marre. My idea was to take train 312, the remnant of NYC's *Southwestern Limited*, from St. Louis to Indianapolis, then change to the ex-Pennsy *Spirit of St. Louis* for Dayton, all track-age being new for me. The former PRR St. Louis service would last until Amtrak, but I knew the last train on the NYC route was on borrowed time. It was down to just an E8 and a single coach and no longer operated east of Union City on the Indiana-Ohio line.

After work on that early St. Patrick's Day Sunday morning, I took GM&O 5, the *Midnight Special*, from Springfield to St. Louis, arriving in St. Louis Union Station at 7:27 a.m. After breakfast, I

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tried my luck at buying a "Penn Central" ticket to Dayton, with the change of trains at Indy. No luck, of course. The ticket stock read "New York Central" on the St. Louis-Indy portion and "Pennsylvania" on the Dayton leg.

In due time I boarded NYC coach 3035, standing at the bumping post behind E8 4048, for the 9:40 departure. The car began to fill up. Soon I heard conversation that bore investigation. Then I confirmed from a crewman what I'd overheard—this was the train's last run! Discontinuance had been granted the night before. Never in all my travels had I unknowingly stumbled onto a last run, nor has it occurred since.

Most of the trip up the old Big Four that gray day was routine. We met 341, our westbound counterpart, near Shelbyville, Ill., passing each other slowly. Both vestibules were jammed with railroaders and riders waving hearty farewells. At Mattoon, Ill., a crew-change point, there was time for the traditional "last run" photo of the crews posing beside the diesel. As we neared Indy, the yardmaster at the big Avon Yard apparently forgot about us, for we left the main to wander through the huge facility amidst hundreds of freight cars. Despite this, I had ample time at Union Station after our 2:55 p.m. arrival (5 minutes early!) to wait for 30 and its scheduled 4:55 departure for Dayton.

After my visit, I returned to St. Louis on the counterpart *Spirit*, train 31. It came into Dayton an hour late, but schedule-padding put us into St. Louis only 40 minutes down. No matter—I had two hours before the 2:40 departure of Illinois Central 22, the *Green Diamond*, for Springfield. My Dayton-St. Louis route was, of course, former PRR all the way—I had no choice.

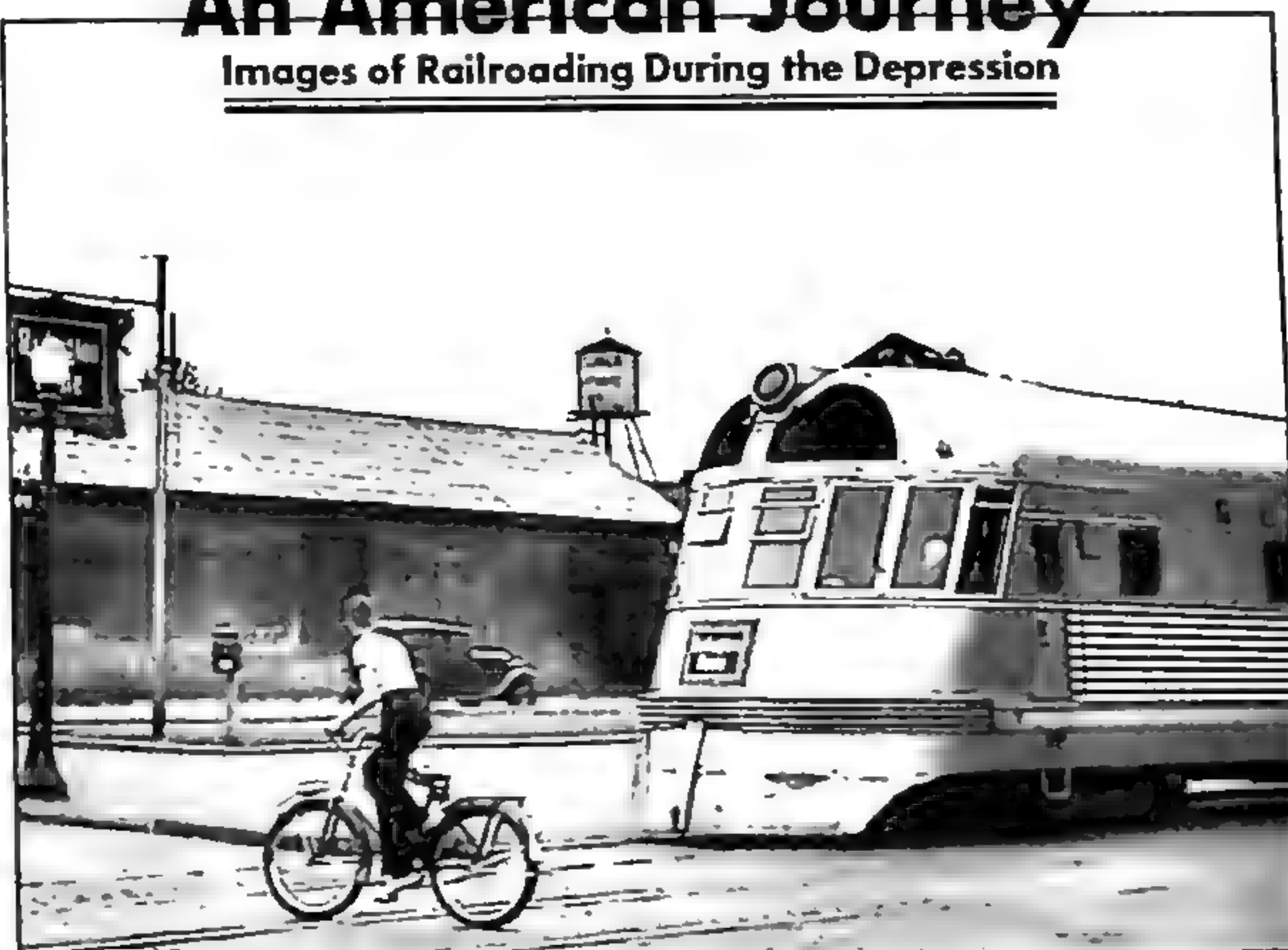
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The Way It Was

**Welch: Santa Fe's
Arizona outpost**

BEFORE A 1960 line-relocation project, the two main tracks of the Santa Fe Railway's transcontinental main line split at Supai, a few miles west of Williams, Ariz. The westbound track took the more direct but steeper route downgrade, while the eastbound track followed a more circuitous route, enabling trains to more easily climb the steep Supai hill. Twelve miles west of Williams the tracks met again, at a tiny outpost named Welch.

Welch was an OS station, one of many scattered along the line in pre-radio days. Their function was to report the status of trains to the dispatcher over the company telephone or telegraph. When a train passed such an of-

fice, it was reported as "out of station," or "OS."

Welch outlasted other isolated OS stations because of its strategic location. Westbound trains were sometimes re-routed down the eastbound track when a derailment occurred on the westbound track, and vice-versa. Welch was where the re-routed train crossed over to its proper track, oncoming eastbound trains being held there until the eastbound main line was cleared.

I know Welch, for during World War II, when my mother worked for the Santa Fe as an operator, we lived there. Welch had no stores, schools, medical facilities . . . nothing. Today OSHA

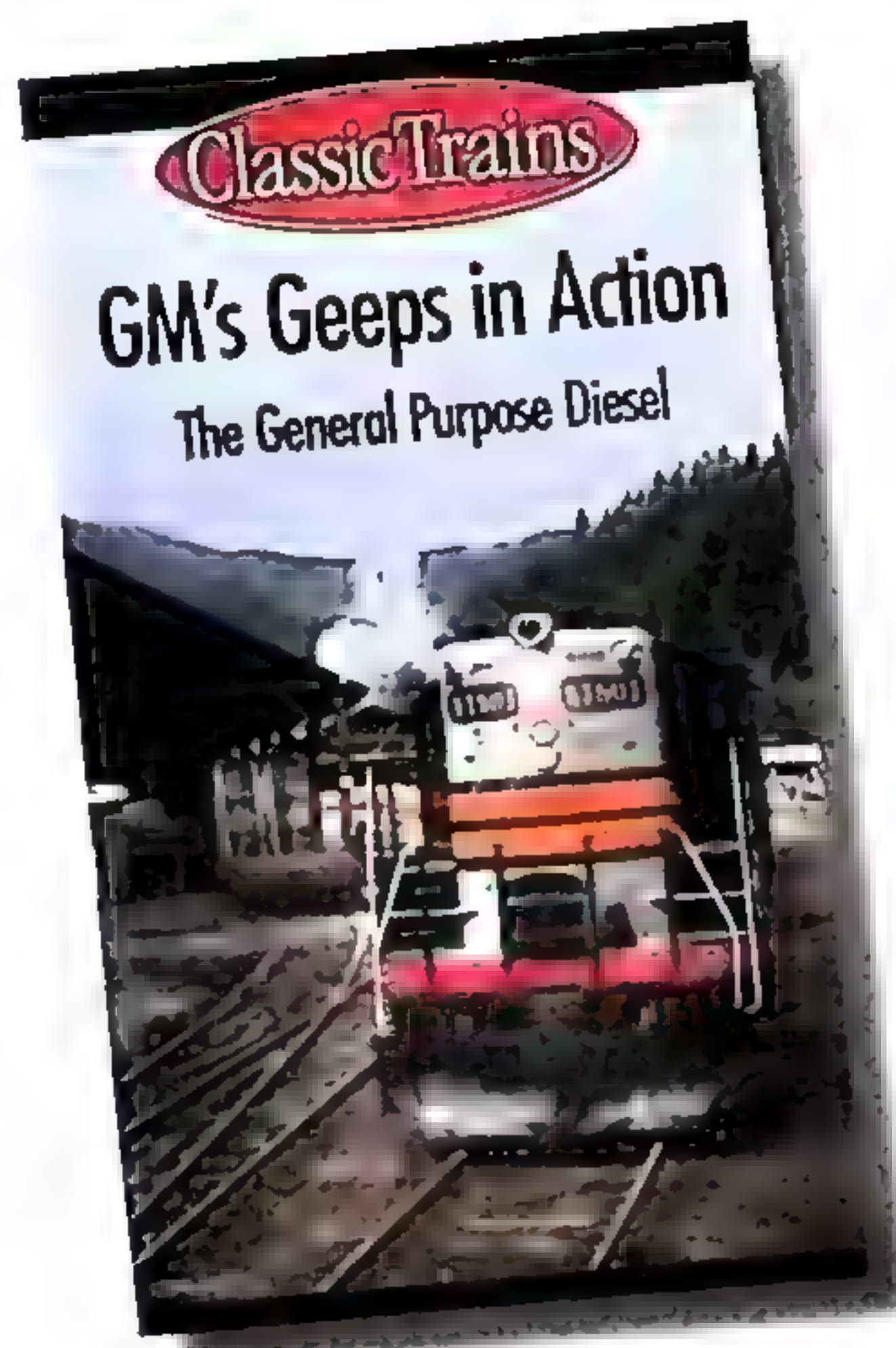
With the operator out "watching it by" (below), an eastbound local passes Welch. In 1944, a steam engine on the rear end helps FT diesel 126 move a freight up the horseshoe curve just east of Welch.



TWO PHOTOS: CHARLES W. LINDENBERG



GM's Geeps: The General Purpose Diesel



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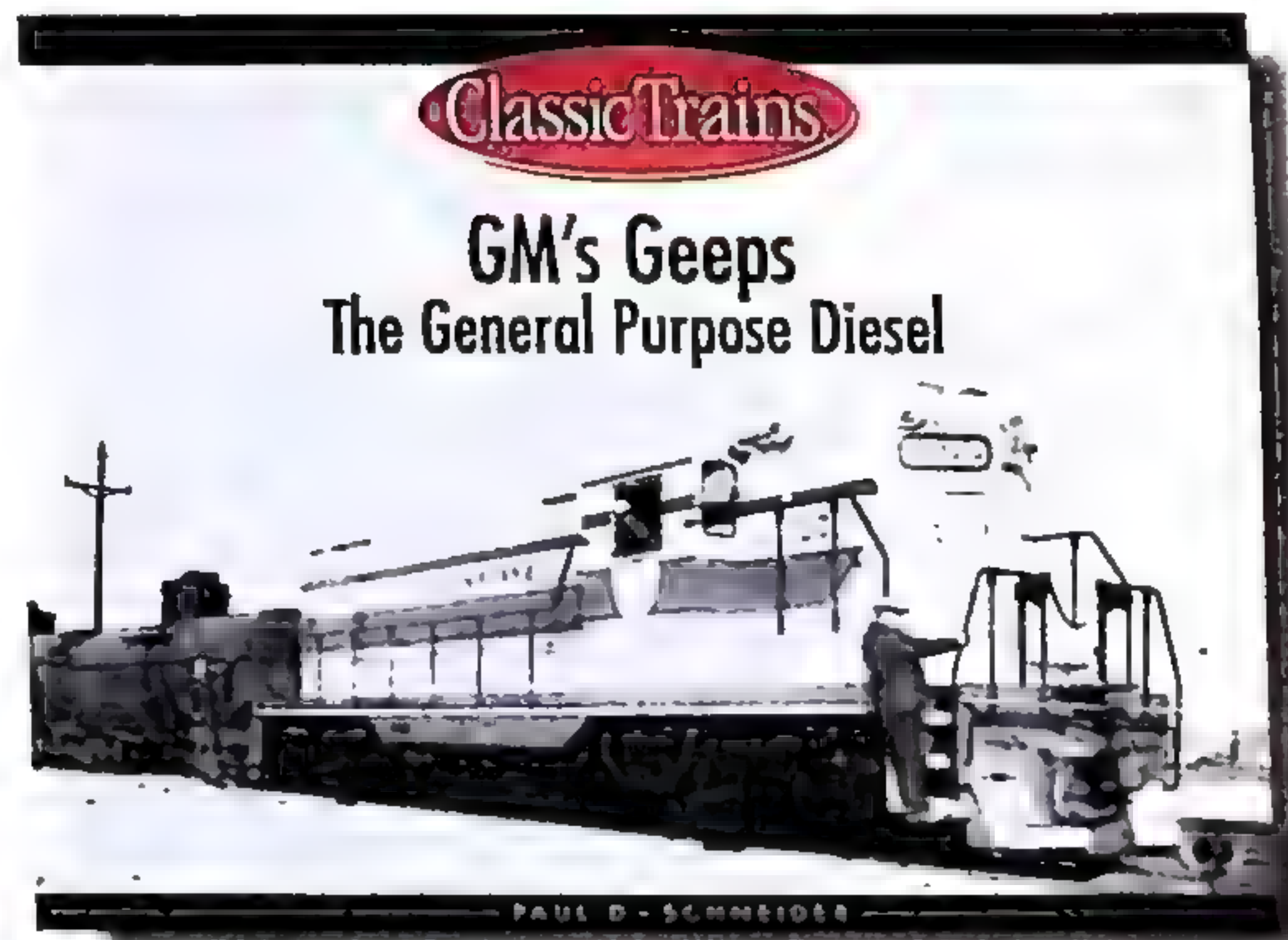


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The Way It Was

might have a fit, but during the war there was a job to be done, and Santa Fe employees proudly did their bit.

Welch's original office was a converted one-room salt storage building, and vestiges of salt could still be found in the cracks and crevices. Eventually the railroad put a partition inside the old building, adding a small room to the rear, where a relief operator could catch a little sleep. The only other living accommodations were three flimsy trailers for the operators.

Along with the yellow office and trailers were a coal house made of railroad ties, a small company telephone booth, and an outhouse.

Welch had no electricity other than the 25-cycle current for the block signal lights, making kerosene the only choice for cooking, heating, and lighting. The Santa Fe did not provide kerosene for the living quarters, only enough for the office lamps. The operators had to haul their own kerosene in 5-gallon cans along with their groceries. Since no electricity meant no refrigerators, blocks of ice kept the food cold in the trailers' small ice boxes. The railroad dropped off ice once a week during the summer; during the winter everyone knew it was cold so no ice delivery was deemed necessary. A local train delivered water each Monday to the four wooden barrels alongside the office. Used for drinking, washing, cooking, and any pets or flowers, this ration had to last for one week.

Entering the little office, you passed an old black coal stove supplying the only heat. At the far south end, on the right, were the two steel semaphore levers. The rest of the south wall was taken up by a large wooden desk with cubbyholes containing the paperwork needed to run a railroad. A small wooden box with a jack allowed the operator to switch between the dispatcher's line and the conversation phone, where you could call other stations, the wire chief, or other officials. Other than that, there was no outside communication. The telephone itself sat on the end of an extendable swivel and the operator wore a headset, pushing a button on another wooden box to talk.

Life at Welch was not easy. Younger operators, particularly women, found

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the isolation difficult if not intolerable. Few remained long—they either bid out at the first opportunity or quit altogether. There was simply nothing to do, nowhere to go, or anyone to go anywhere with. You worked your eight hours, with a short lunch break, slept eight hours, then with your remaining eight hours thought of all the things you could be doing back in civilization. Otherwise, you read, found hobbies, or indulged in other forms of home-grown entertainment. *If* you had a car—most operators didn't—and *if* Johnson Canyon wasn't flooded, and *if* you wanted to abuse your car on the awful roads, you could spend a few hours in town.

The actual work consisted of periods of boredom punctuated with moments of chaos. The operator sat in a wooden captain's chair listening to the dispatcher's phone. The two block lights above the windows shone dimly until a

train entered the block, a few miles up the line. The appropriate light went out and the operator immediately called the dispatcher.

"Welch, block west?"

"Okay Welch, that's extra 136. Nothing for him, let him go."

The operator pulled back the left-hand lever, and far up on the semaphore the right-hand arm dropped down and the red light turned to green, granting the diesel-powered freight right of passage. When the train rounded the bend to the east, the operator went outside and watched it pass, looking for hotboxes or any other irregularities. When the caboose rumbled by, the operator went back in, put on the headset, and spoke again.

"OS Welch."

"Go ahead, Welch."

"Extra 136 by at 9:08."

"Okay."

Extra 136 was easy—just watch him go by. Often, however, the dispatcher had to get word to the train crew to clear (get out of the way of) a superior train. With no radios, this required "handing up" the information.

But that's another story.

—Charles W. Lindenberg

The Reverend and the Rock Island

AS AN EPISCOPAL PRIEST serving in Iowa in the 1960's, I was lucky to have Gordon V. Smith as my bishop. Bishop Smith was always eager to do whatever he could to make life easier and happier for us clergy who were in his jurisdiction. He was fascinated with my interest in railroads, and was found often at one of the control

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The Way It Was

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The first church I served after ordination was St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Durant, Iowa, about 25 miles west of Davenport on the Rock Island's Chicago-Colorado main line. No passenger trains stopped at Durant in the 1960's.

In those days railroads would give passes to clergy, and I was indeed pleased when Bishop Smith applied for a Rock Island pass for me. It arrived one day in 1962, a square of green pasteboard in a brown envelope.

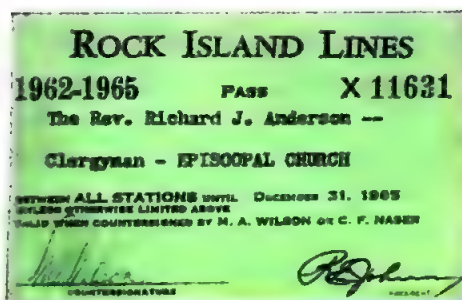
Never mind that the pass would not be honored on 14 of the Rock's top trains. It was good on secondary trains, and on all routes served by only one train. A year or so later the pass became valid for half fare on the *Rockets* and the *Golden State*. Yes, the pass was a treasure to me, but it alarmed the mission committee of St. Paul's Church. They likened a railfan having a pass to a person with a drinking problem having an unlimited supply of free booze.

I used the pass carefully. I would "save up" days off until I had accrued three or four, and then use them up riding the Rock. My first trip was from Davenport to Des Moines on train 9, the *Corn Belt Rocket*, returning on nameless No. 6. I displayed my pass to

the conductor. He simply nodded and walked on by. What a treat!

Between 1962 and '66 I rode most of the Rock Island, for free on the secondary trains and for half fare on the others. I took trains 7 and 8, the *Rocky Mountain Rocket*, to Denver and back, paying \$7 for a roomette. Then came a trek from West Liberty to St. Paul, down to Burlington, Iowa, and back to West Liberty on the *Zephyr Rocket*. I went out to Tucumcari, N.Mex., and back on the remnants of the old *Imperial*, trains 39 and 40. The conductor out of Davenport couldn't believe I would be riding all the way on a train that plodded its way across Kansas and the Texas panhandle.

I did use the pass for church business from time to time. To attend a meeting in Des Moines, I would take the *Corn Belt Rocket* from Davenport east to Chicago for an evening, paying the half fare plus an additional few dollars for a parlor-car seat. At La Salle Street Station I would get a roomette on No. 9, arriving in Des Moines early in the morning but enjoying the luxury of sleeping later in the set-out sleeper. My travel expenses to attend the meeting were less than those of many of the people who had come by car!



PHILIP A. WEIBLER

I was sent as a delegate to a conference in Little Rock in 1964. I took the *Golden State* from Davenport to Kansas City, then the *Twin Star Rocket* from K.C. to El Reno, Okla. At El Reno I transferred to one of the Rock Island's RDC's, running as train 24, arriving in Little Rock at 3:10 in the afternoon on the day before the conference started. The RDC ride was great, especially when the friendly engineer invited me to "come on up front" after leaving McAlester, Okla.

I left Little Rock at 2:45 a.m. the day after the conference ended. The agent in Rock Island's brick depot announced train 21 with the pride a Santa Fe man might have used to present the *Super Chief*: "Train No. 21, the *Cherokee*, now arriving on track 1 from Memphis with coach service to Booneville, McAlester, Oklahoma City, El Reno, Amarillo, Tucumcari, El Paso, Phoenix, and Los Angeles. That's train 21, the *Cherokee*." No. 21, of course, was two E units, a long string of head-end cars and a single Harriman-roof coach, and it hadn't carried the *Cherokee* name for years.

My biggest regret is that I never did get to Houston on the Rock Island. But I did journey to just about every other corner of the system, including a caboose ride to South Dakota.

In 1966 I moved to Dubuque, Iowa, and rail travel options were provided by the Burlington Route trains through East Dubuque and the Illinois Central's *Land O' Corn* and *Hawkeye*. I learned from the IC agent in Dubuque that I could use my Rock Island pass for half-fare travel on non-RI trains through what was called the "home-road plan."

Many years have passed since I last used my Rock Island pass. My crew cut has been replaced with gray hair, my salary check with a pension check, and the *Rockets* and other such trains are the deceased ancestors of Amtrak. I do have a Visa card that provides free miles on Amtrak, and whenever I take advantage of such rewards I think back to my earlier free travel by train. Bishop Smith died a few years ago, but before he did, he heard from me many times about how much I appreciated that Rock Island pass. I still have it, as well as the memories it has provided.

—Richard J. Anderson

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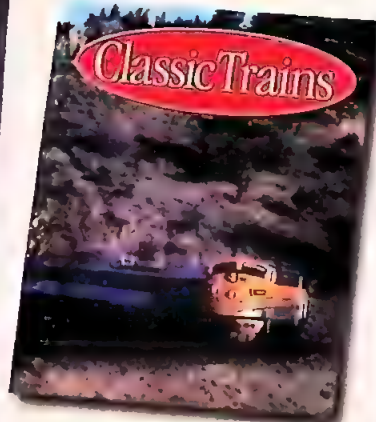
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The Way It Was

The right touch

FOR MANY YEARS, the Lehigh Valley maintained some offices in downtown Philadelphia, even though this was an off-line point. In the mid-1940's, the Valley relocated the offices to its building just west of the Bethlehem (Pa.) Union Station. The LV cushioned the hardship of the move by having a special chartered train run each working day over the Reading's Bethlehem branch, a distance of 56.6 miles each way. Thus the many Valley office workers who lived around Philadelphia were provided with free transportation pending their possible home relocations closer to the new offices.

Donald L. Kirk, who worked in LV's Freight Accounting Department, told me about an interesting trip on the employee train, which usually had three coaches hauled by a Reading G-1sa Pacific. One afternoon at Bethlehem, the 4-6-2 was missing and in its place was an I-8sb Camelback 2-8-0. Baldwin and Reading Shops built 117 of these engines between 1905 and 1914. Originally heavy coal haulers, they had been downgraded to general utility work.

The ride home that day was slow and tedious. As the old freight hog jogged along at 35 mph, Don cursed the Reading for putting such an engine on the train. Upon arrival in Reading Terminal, he mentioned the engine and the slow run to the engineer, who was oiling around the running gear.

"This engine is old and nearly worn out, so we can't run her very fast," was the explanation given.

Down at the Terminal the following morning, Don was surprised and thoroughly disgusted to find that same I-8 coupled to the train for the run to Bethlehem. But what he did not know was that a different engineer was in the cab. Yes, that "old, worn-out engine" suddenly came to life and took the train to Bethlehem so fast they arrived ahead of time. For years, these engines had been known for their fast runs with the Gettysburg milk train and, regardless of their age in the 1940's, they obviously still had the guts to run their wheels off. All that was required was a hogger who knew how to do it.

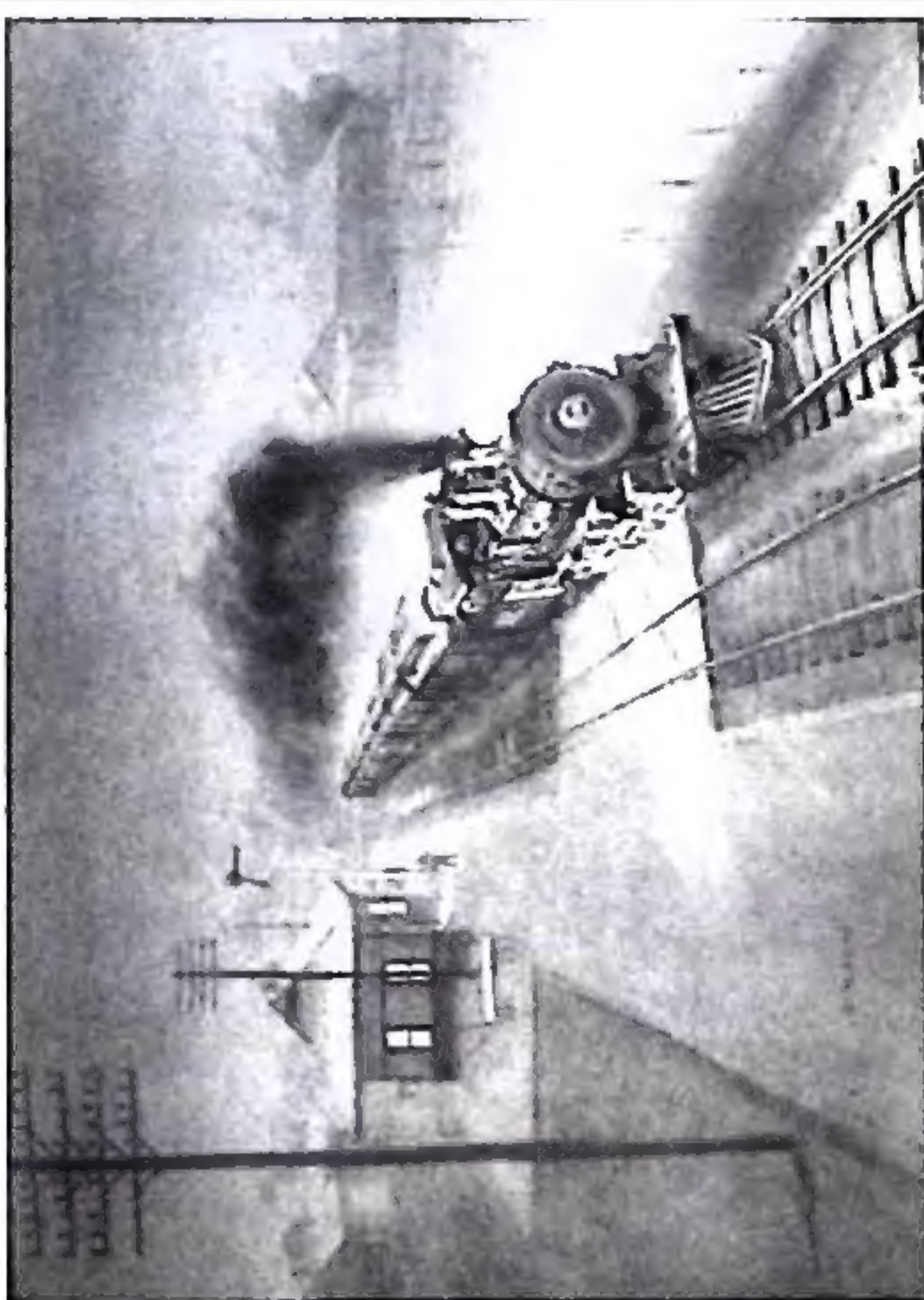
—Bert Pennypacker

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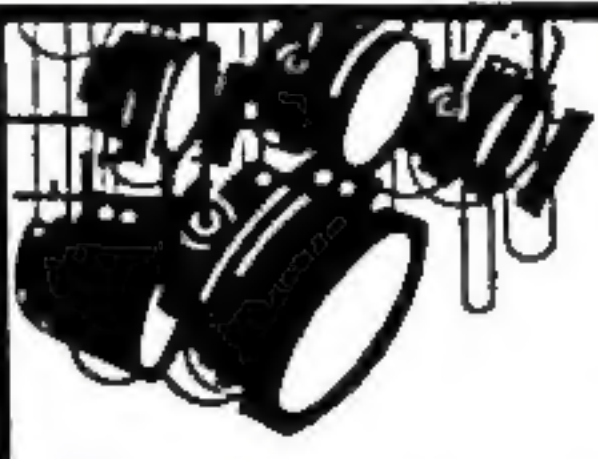
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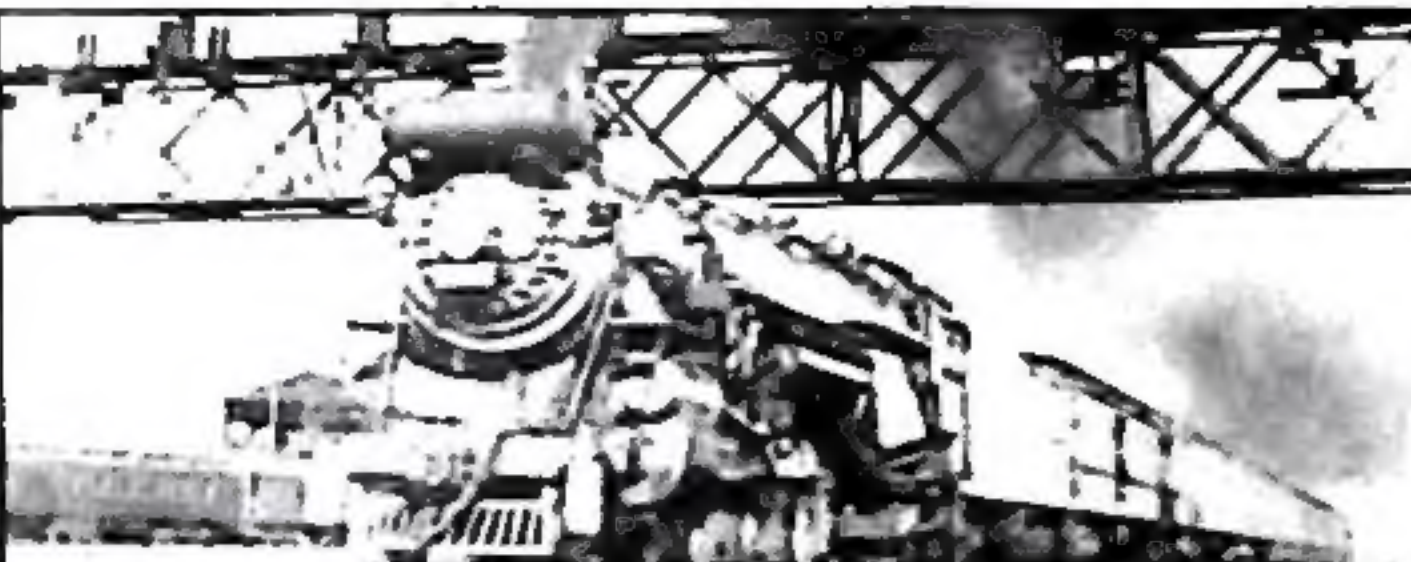
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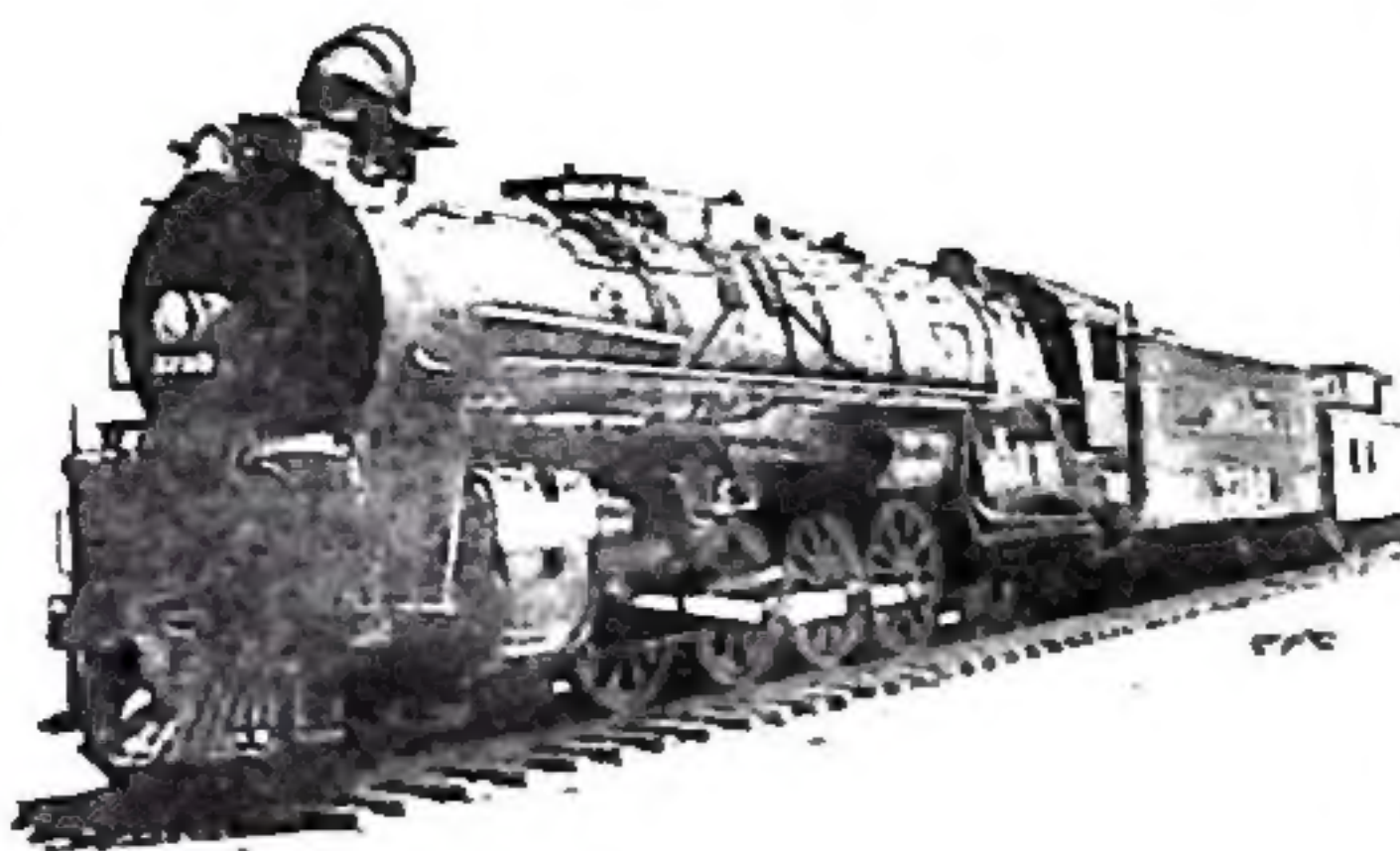
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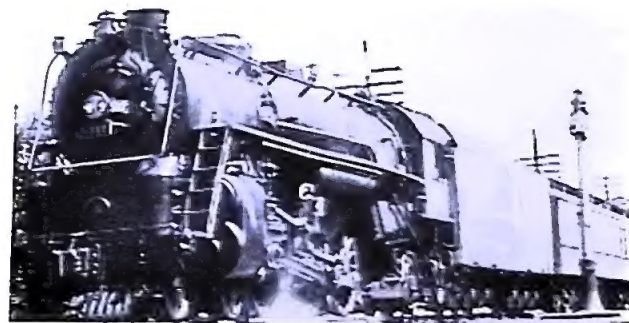
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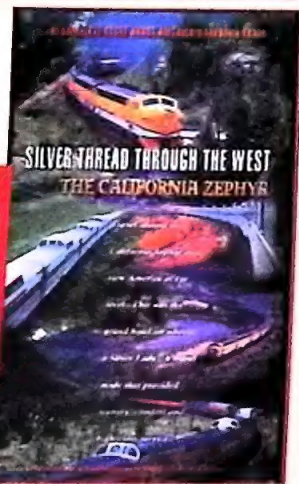
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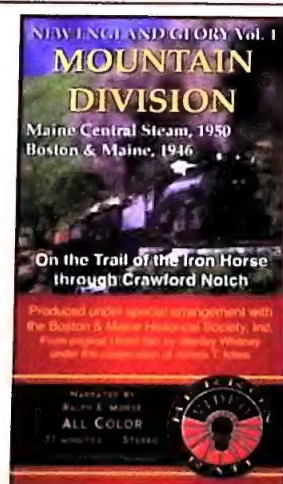


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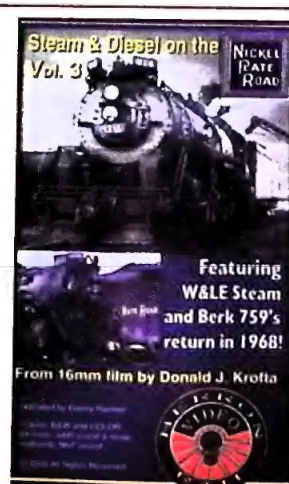
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